



DIY Mexican Bug
Restored at home '82



Really wild Thing
Chopped, custom 181

VOLKS WORLD



'56 RHD OVAL
THE COOLEST PART? HE'S ONLY 26
AND HE LEARNT TO DRIVE IN IT!

AIR BEAM-EQUIPPED WESTY

"Let's do something silly"

SLAM THE FAMILY CAMPER BUT KEEP IT USEABLE



PLUS

HOW TO

Engine tech: stripping a 1600 long block

THE FREDDY FILES

2015 cruise to Ninove

STAFF PROJECTS

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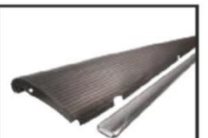


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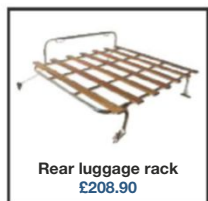


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Featured in Volksworld May 2014.

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VOLKSWORLD

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WELCOME TO THE MAG

There's not a day goes by when we don't receive an email from one helpful soul or another reporting a scam advert for a VW in our online classifieds. I'd like to say thank you for informing us, and we know this happens as, no matter how diligent the bods who handle our classified ads are (no one on editorial has anything to do with them), the occasional rogue ad slips through the net.

Scam ads are a sad fact of life. There are legions of unscrupulous scoundrels posting them all over the internet, or offering to share a windfall with you, all you have to do is email back with your bank account details. The thing is you just need to use common sense to spot a scam.

As a general rule of thumb, if something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. A Split Bus with all the toys for a fiver? Of course it's a scam. I'm tempted to ask who falls for such things, except it seems a great many do, as we also hear from people who have lost their savings by sending money to someone they've never met off the back of a few online photos.

Having bought a Bus from thesamba.com myself, I know the risks, but there were a number of things I did to allay my fears before parting with any cash. True, it would've been better to fly out and see it, and the owner, in person, but I couldn't afford that. So, instead, I picked up the 'phone and spoke to the seller. I also asked him for loads of specific pictures of areas he would have to shoot especially for me to prove he was in possession of the vehicle. And I asked around for other people's experiences of him.

It was still a nerve-wracking experience, but it worked for me. If you're still worried, check out volksworld.com/scam ■



James Peene
Group editor



Lavenham 2016 is on

There has been growing speculation recently as to whether there will be another International Vintage Volkswagen Meeting at Lavenham in 2016, following the decision by Malcolm Hawkins and Adrian Chalmers to stand down as organisers.

However, at Malcolm's invitation, and following a very positive meeting with Lavenham Council, the Historic Volkswagen Club will run the event on June 24-26 2016.

Organisation is still at an early stage, but the meeting is likely to follow the established format, with registration taking place from early Friday afternoon, displays distributed throughout the village on the Saturday, followed by a meal in the evening and then a run out on the Sunday morning. Traders can register their preliminary interest by email to info@vintage-volkswagens-lavenham.co.uk, but keep an eye on the forum on www.pre67vw.com for interim updates, while full information will be available on the dedicated event website: www.vintage-volkswagens-lavenham.co.uk in due course.



VW Heretics

If you've missed your monthly VAG fix then you've not long to wait. Taking place on the third Thursday of the (Summer) months the VW Heretics meet are back in business from April 16. Organised by the lovely ladies and gentlemen at VW Heritage they kick off at 6.30pm and wind up at 9pm. With live music, burgers and a laid back atmosphere they're a great mid-week VW get together and there's always a good gathering of cool cars. If you're looking for parts you can buy/collect them too, as the shop opens at 7pm. For more info about the first get together and dates of the next go to facebook.com/vwheritage/events



Licence changes

We've never really understood why the DVLA issued handy, credit card-sized driving licences, but then insisted you keep the less handy paper counterpart with it. Well, the good news is that from June 8 this year the paper element will no longer be valid. From that date you can rip it up and just carry the photo card. If you're really old school and still only have a paper licence issued from before the photo card was introduced in 1998, keep it, it's still valid. Clear? Good.



Apex festival

We love the Apex Festival. With its laid back family atmosphere, car displays and track action this is anything but a static show. With racing and the opportunity to join the fun with parade laps over the course of the weekend it's a cracking reason to head to the Lydden Hill Race Circuit on May 9-10. Due its southerly location (just 10 minutes from the Dover ferry and tunnel ports, this show attracts a number of foreign visitors, so there are always cars we've never seen before too. For more info and to book your advance tickets check out www.apexfestival.co.uk





Innovation corner

Too much conformity is not good for the soul

Like the coming of spring, I always look forward to this time of year (I'm writing this a week before The VolksWorld Show at the end of March). A new show season inevitably brings with it a wave of freshly-built Volkswagens, and that's what makes this job so much fun. Whilst I personally love a fully detailed show car that ticks all the 'right' boxes, I really get my kicks from seeing something different, something more personal. As such, these days I find it's often the more budget orientated cars that catch my eye, primarily because they seem to be the ones built by more inventive owners, happy to go their own way rather than conform.

Twice in the last couple of days I have read comments in high profile places from well-known 'names' in the world of Volkswagens relating to the cost of building VWs. Whilst I happen to agree with what both of them were saying, I still think it's dangerous territory to get into. To say it costs X amount to build a good car these days, or Y amount to have a car painted / trimmed, or Z for a set of wheels or an engine is, at the very least, blinkered. Here's why. Many years ago, when I was a teenager, desperately trying to amass the funds to have my first Beetle repainted, I discussed with my then girlfriend's dad the price of a respray. He wasn't a flash man, but he was a wealthy one, and his ballpark figure for a paint job was 10 grand. In 1990. I, on the other hand, was budgeting somewhere around £1,000, hopefully with a bit of rust repair thrown in. Straight away you're making a judgement, right? You might be thinking he was insane, or just rich, and out of touch with the real world. Alternatively, you might be thinking I was insane, and out of touch with the real world. The reality is neither of us were (or are). His figure was based on what he had been quoted to have his 1920's Rolls Royce repainted, mine was on how much I could afford at the time. Apples and oranges perhaps, but my point is it all depends on your frame of reference. I frequently see 'knowledgeable experts' on various forums stating categorically what a paint job will / should cost. Averaging it out, I'd say it usually comes in at somewhere around £1,500. Now, I'm not saying you can't have a car painted for that, but it all depends what you want, and what you are prepared to accept. If you want a car that competes with today's top rung show cars, it's going to cost you that much, or more,

“
Anyone
can
imitate,
it takes
vision
and balls
to truly
innovate
”

What do you think?

Do you agree with the ex-ginger Oracle, or do you think he's talking twaddle? Join the debate by emailing us at volksworld@timeinc.com



It may not be the first, but it's the first Bus I've seen with a Golf TDi motor mated to a Passat 5-speed. Brilliant

in materials alone. Yet we've had cars and Buses in our three VW titles recently that have been painted for a fraction of that – by borderline lunatics perhaps, but by lunatics that have enjoyed every minute of the build process, and turned out vehicles that have stood out, rather than blended in.

It was Carl Parker, the owner of the custom Trekker in this issue, that most recently reaffirmed what I have been thinking for a long time now. "There seems to be too much conformity amongst VW people these days," he said. By his own admission, Carl is far from the arbiter of all things VW, yet he is right on the money with that comment. Look what happened when Kinky Mick Tattersall put a set of "wide-5 Fuchs" on his Lowlight Ghia. Everyone, almost without exception, slated him for it. If you know Mick you'll know he couldn't care less, but the attitudes expressed perfectly back up what Carl said.

Perfect sense

When it comes to engines, what's your take on Subaru, or Golf TDi engines in an old VW, for example? I wouldn't advocate putting one in a nice, original stocker, but in a customised VW why not? From an economic point of view, they make perfect sense. Buying one won't set you back more than a couple of hundred quid. They give more power, better fuel economy and all sorts of other benefits over a VW air-cooled engine. The only downside is they're not a VW air-cooled engine.

Yet some of the best, most inspiring, most useable custom VWs I've ever seen have been alternative engined, and all the better for it. When Phil McGovern, the owner of the Bay Window on this month's cover, mentioned in conversation he had a friend trying to push him down the route of fitting a Toyota GT86 engine into his Bus my ears pricked up. A quick bit of internet investigation elicits the fact that the aforementioned Toyota is a joint project with Subaru, and is powered by a direct and port-injected, 200bhp, flat four boxer motor attached to a six-speed manual transmission. What a brilliant idea! Phil's Bus isn't a stocker, it's slammed to the floor, has numerous body mods and he uses it for blats into France with the family. For my money, fitting a modern, performance engine like this is exactly what he should be doing with that Bus, and it will make it truly different. Okay, I've said my bit.

In the heyday of VW customising it was all about who could do something different with their Volkswagen. Admittedly, some worked better than others, but that was generally down to personal taste, and all kept the scene fresh and vibrant. Like then, it doesn't have to come down to how much money you spend. As I have written before, anyone can imitate, but it takes vision and balls to truly innovate. Isn't it about time we all stopped conforming, and started enjoying ourselves again? You never know, we might even save a bit of money in the process. ■

EVENTS AND CLUBS

Let us know about your VW event or club – email volksworld@timeinc.com



Brazil nuts

We head to South America for one of the largest air-cooled VW gatherings in the world

Words Cathal O'Toole Photos Gerson Douglas Ampessan

If you think you've been to a big VW show because there were maybe 500 VWs there, or maybe even 600, how would you feel if you found yourself at a show with close to 1,300 VWs? I think that would be heaven for most of us, right? We certainly think so and, when you add in the most beautiful scenery of the most beautiful Brazil, you have the makings of one heck of a VW show. What show do I speak of? Volksfriends, that's what.

Last July, the city of Pomerode in the north central region of the state of Santa Catarina

welcomed people, and the aforementioned 1,300 VWs of course, to the eighth edition of Volksfriends. It all started with a meeting between five members of the organising club, PomerVols, who came up with the idea. On its

“It's safe to say that Volksfriends is a massive success”

debut, just 30 VWs showed up to Volksfriends 1, but over the next seven years this number has grown to a point where the visitors almost compete with the number of people that actually live in the city! It's safe to say then that Volksfriends is a massive success.

But there is another side to Volksfriends, and that is the charitable side. Last year, the organisers asked exhibitors to donate non-perishable foodstuffs, which were then given to local institutions such as hospitals and rehab clinics. In total, 2,000kg of food was donated, which is an incredible achievement.

The dates for the 2015 Volksfriends meeting are December 5-6 so, if anyone fancies Christmas in Brazil, this is the year to do it. ■

Late model parts on a pre-'64 small window Beetle? Not so, just one of those quirky Brazilian models



The number plate says it all. This is one Hot Volks on Cosmics



EVENTS AND CLUBS

Let us know about your VW event or club – email volksworld@timeinc.com

Super narrowed beam alert. Austin Powers multi-point turns come to mind



Rolling on DSRs, this accessorised Bug has some serious attitude



Split Single Cab with a wide body and Deluxe trim



'90s-inspired Resto Cal with 21st century rims and stance



Widened Mexi-steels and patina. The kids loved it!



Woof! That's some serious rubber under those rear wings



This German Look Brazilian Bug looks Bob on to us



A rare beast in any country, but a Late Bay Double Cab is an especially rare sight in Brazil



Our November 2014 Car of the Month in Readers' rides was Rodrigo Buffalo's '62 Resto Cal



EVENTS AND CLUBS

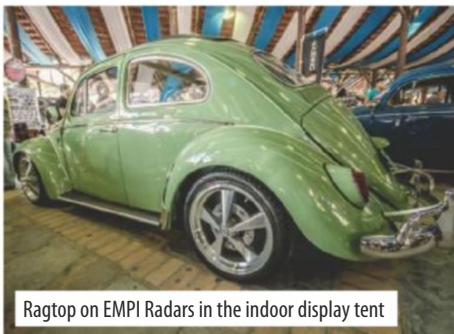
Let us know about your VW event or club – email volksworld@timeinc.com

Chopped 'n' dropped Beetle was loaded with neat custom touches



◀ A Brasilia of this standard must be unusual, even in Brazil

✓ This one's got editor Peene's name written all over it



Ragtop on EMPI Radars in the indoor display tent



▲ Dropped, two-tone Ghia on Cosmics looked the coolest. Did you notice the black bumpers?

➤ You hardly notice the Australian-style side trim with its subtle colour change in the trim. Ropey bumper trick has spread to Brazil, too



You wait for one German Looker, and then two come along at once



Dig this panned Panel on Fumigalis with Greased Lightning centre caps



The SP2 was made for the Brazilian market from '72-'76. This one looks to be a beauty



EVENTS AND CLUBS

Let us know about your VW event or club – email volksworld@timeinc.com

1970 Beetle wore its EMPI Deep Dish alloys well



^ If you're on the hunt for a Brasilia, Brazil is the place to go looking (or Portugal-MP)

^ Want your car photographed? Follow these guidelines: red, stanced, Fuchs, stand back



^ Gulf Blue early '60s Bug looked good on its Rader copies. Seems narrowed beams are all the rage, the world over

^ If you're going to have a ragtop, Brazil is the place for it. Check the beautiful sky through this one

^ No show these days would be complete without a slammed Split covered in patina



^ Another narrowed beam, this time paired with Gasburners, on a sweet looking Resto Cal

EVENT LIST

CamperFest

When: April 4-6

Where: Chester Racecourse

Web: chesterfoodanddrink.co.uk/camperfest

Elemental VW Show

When: April 11

Where: Crouch Valley Showground, Rayleigh, Essex

Web: www.elementalvw.org.uk

Clubs Unite at The Beach

When: April 12

Where: Berron Beach, Somerset

Web: www.facebook.com/clubsuniteatthebeach

Bus Types VW Show

When: April 17-19

Where: Oswestry Showground, Shropshire

Web: www.bustypesvwshow.co.uk

Jumpstart

When: April 25

Where: Loughmore Village, Ireland

Web: www.carsandchrome.com

Big Bang

When: April 24-26

Where: Santa Pod, Wellingborough

Web: www.big-bang.co.uk

The Wolfsburg Run Out

When: May 1-10

Where: Start and finish in Calais

Web: www.facebook.com/thewolfsburgrunout

VW TOMIE

When: May 1-4

Where: Orsett Showground, Essex, RM16 3JU

Web: www.vw-tomie.co.uk

Vanwest VW Holiday

When: May 8-10

Where: Warren Farm holiday park, Somerset

Web: www.vanwest.net

Apex Festival

When: May 8-10

Where: Lydden Hill Race Circuit, Kent

Web: www.apexfestival.co.uk

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✓ Number plate brackets

From: vwheritage.com Price: £18.50

Looking for a way to attach a front number plate to your Beetle without drilling holes in your bumper? Then check these out. They sandwich either side of the bottom edge of your blade or Europa bumper, using a nut and bolt and two serrated fixings. And as another bonus they're quick to remove if you want to look cool and number plate free once you've arrived at a show



> Rothfink mug

From: www.rothfinkindustries.com Price: £8.99

These two mugs are the latest in a fantastic range of fresh new products to come from the weird and wonderful world of Rothfink. The single mug has both the images shown here, one on either side, so, whether you're a lefty or a righty, you'll enjoy the view. It even comes packaged in its own designer 'patina' box



< Cordless wrench

From: www.sealey.co.uk Price: £599.94

Sealey's new cordless lithium-ion impact wrench puts an end to the struggle of removing stubborn wheel nuts or other high torque fasteners, thanks to the power and torque, which comes in at a meaty 650Nm (480ft.lbs). It comes with forward and reverse controls, variable speed, an integral LED work light and a brace of power packs



^ Rust-free panels

From: mcjproducts.com Price: various

If you're embarking on a restoration and only the best metal will do, then we have some great news. MCJ Products have just received a huge shipment of used, genuine VW panels covering most air-cooled models, so whether it's an Early Bay front clip you need or a set of Beetle wings, MCJ Products have got it covered



< Campervan sleeping bag

From: www.trufflesuffle.co.uk Price: £69.99

Even if you don't have a Campervan, you need to get one of these Split Screen sleeping bags from Truffle Shuffle. The kids will love it and, the way prices are going, this could be your last chance to sleep in a Split Bus without re-mortgaging your house!



^ Shine on

From: www.meguiars.co.uk Price: £11.50 for gel, £7 for applicator

Everyone likes a shiny black tyre, but not a too shiny one. Meguiar's Endurance tyre gel last for weeks and isn't so greasy it looks like an '80s wet perm, unlike some on the market. Pair it with the tampon (their word, not ours) applicator pad and you're set for this summer's shows



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T99201

German quality complete front wheel arch skin Right 80-91



S72991

German quality internal door release surrounds 68-72



German quality T25 bottom slide door runner RHD 80-91

T32742



S29121

German VW early bay dash speedo pod complete RHD

V00088

Vintage speed Type 4 Baywindow Bus hidden tail pipe super flow muffler



Genuine VW complete lock & handle set on one set of keys 85-91

T28816

S88340



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E03164



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K00425



K80405

Klassik fab complete cab floor RHD 68-69



K00738

Klassik fab rear valance 59-65



K00676

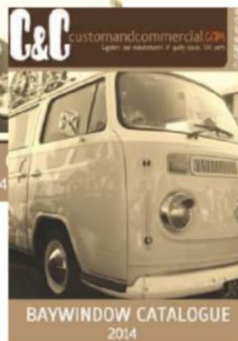
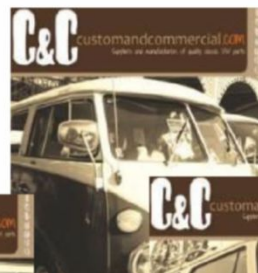
Klassik fab complete rear corner Right 62-67



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Letter of the month



Classic car death row

Ian McDiarmid, Edinburgh

Hi there, I was looking through the internet on a quiet evening when I happened upon a post on pre67.com about our scrappage scheme. The post pointed out the vast number of cars still waiting to be scrapped, such as the uptake on the scheme, but what really got me was the number of 'good' cars that seemed to have been sent for scrappage. To me, that's a total waste, but what really made me twitch were the vast lines of classic cars that looked like they were in super condition. At first I thought it was a joke, because the lines of classics could easily have been photographed at a classic car show. These were no junkers but, sadly, the owners were obviously won over by the idea of a 'cheap' new car. The worst thing is that we can't even buy parts from these cars while they sit on a classic car death row.

Hi Ian, although we cannot comment on the validity of the photos on the thread you mention, if they are genuine it is very sad to see. Unfortunately, the 2009/10 UK scrappage scheme was grasped upon by many non-classic car enthusiasts as a way of getting shot of what they perceived to be 'old bangers' taking up space in their lives (of the 400,000 cars handed in, about 2,000 were recognised 'classics'). Yes, perhaps they could have been sold to private individuals but, with £2,000 on offer against the price of a new car, without any of the hassle of selling privately, it did appear to be an attractive offer to some. We agree it is criminal no provision was made to break the cars to help keep other classics on the road, but then there are many reasons why those in positions of power would rather we were all driving new cars... – MP

A Spitfire? How very dare you!

Nick Searle, via email

Hi VolksWorld, the front spoiler in April's 'Letter of the month' looks so much like one off a Triumph Spitfire (which are very easy to get hold of) I wonder if it will fit a Beetle?

Hi Nick, I like your thinking and, to be honest, I don't know the answer, but this hobby is all about learning. What I do know is the Kamei Beetle spoiler is designed specifically to fit the front bumper of a late model Beetle, with mouldings that fit around the back of the bumper and the bumper brackets. Our guess is one designed for a Spitfire would have similar shapes to fit the Triumph. Of course, anything will fit with enough modification and determination or, as Jimbo says, if you take a long enough run-up! – CO'T



Braking bad

Andy Robinson, via email

Dear VolksWorld, just a quick note to mention something about your feature on page 80 of the March 2015 issue.

The "Braking good" feature, as all your technical features usually are, is very informative and easy to follow. But is lacking something very important. In step 09, reference is made to "roughen up your brake shoes with 80-grit sandpaper" yet nowhere in the feature or the tools list is mentioned the requirement for wearing a dust mask.

As your opener to the article states, "How long has it been since you checked your drum brakes?" It must be considered that they are possibly as old as the hills and could contain asbestos. To advise people to roughen up a brake lining with sandpaper, thus releasing even the smallest amounts of asbestos dust, with no mention of respiratory protection isn't far short of reckless.

This half rant may seem a little OTT but, having personally witnessed people suffering a terrible and lingering illness and premature death from asbestosis, it compels me to say something and bring it to your attention.

Keep up the fantastic work with a great magazine, still as strong as it was in 1989 when I first started reading it!

Thanks Andy. You are, of course, completely right in what you say and, in hindsight, we have to say we are a little surprised our in-house safety boy, Matt, didn't give this a little more consideration. Rest assured, he will be beaten with high performance spark plug leads for his omission. – MP

Consoling Timothy

Timothy Midlander, via email

Hi VolksWorld, I consider myself to be quite the knowledgeable person (within my VW club I am known as Mr. Knowall because I like to help others when it comes to their VW issues). You name it – welding, body repair, timescales for work, electrical gremlins... You name it, I know it all, and feel the need to impart it to everyone I can. Alas, this is not the case as I have been stumped by a piece of plastic and it pains me to have to ask for help.

I bought this centre console for my 1977 1200 Beetle but it doesn't fit. I had the option to buy the tunnel tray that went with it as well, but I decided against it as I didn't want to cut my dash for a radio and this has a radio cut out already. Is it even for a VW? I know Kamei made accessories for other makes such as Vauxhall, so perhaps I've been had? Please advise this once all-knowledgeable enthusiast. Love the magazine by the way.

Hi Timothy, or should we say Mr. Knowall, we loved your email here at VolksWorld HQ, it brightened up an otherwise dreary day in Croydon. We all know someone who likes to think they know it all, and it's refreshing to hear any such person admit defeat! Anyway, here's what we know: (make that I Cathal, no one else here cares about your Tupperware fetish-Ed). The console you bought is for a 1303 Beetle, not a 1200, and is designed to fit snugly under the padded dashboard of said model. There is another version that fits standard (metal) Beetle dashboards, but these are harder to find. – CO'T



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READERS' RIDES

Share your VW with the world! email volksworld@timeinc.com

Car of the month



^ Looks like this ex-Texas import has the 'sunburnt patina' box well and truly ticked. The kids must love it!

✓ We're enjoying the *al fresco* turret top, sans side canvas. Perfect for going on safari, not so good in sideways rain in the UK

Helen and Elliot Goble, '66 Split

Hi *VolksWorld*, my husband is a huge VW enthusiast and owns an original 1966 Split Screen. It is his 30th Birthday on June 7 and I was wondering if there is any way I can get his Bus featured in the magazine as it would make his birthday! The Bus is a left-hand drive import that came in from Texas in 2012. It needed a lot of TLC and my husband has fully rebuilt the engine, as well as restoring the inside, including upholstering all the seats and making the curtains. He had never sewn anything previously, but it looked brilliant as he is very particular and talented. I'm sorry, I'm not mechanically minded, so don't know the ins and outs of the engine rebuild but can find out and I know there are a lot of pictures before and after! He calls the Bus 'the practical rat' as it has remained original on the outside, but

“ The practical rat... original on the outside, clean on the inside ”



clean on the inside, which means we can enjoy the inside for family holidays. He won first in the 'rat and rust' category at Beach Buggin' 2013. Unfortunately, 2014 was cancelled due to the weather as he was hoping to win again!

Simon Venner, '72 Danbury

Just a quick response to the 'Ageing gracefully' article in last month's magazine. Great magazine as always, I've been an avid reader since issue three back in the '80s.

I have to agree with the article. I've had the slammed '70's cars made to look like mid-60's cars. All the usual things: long bonnets; W-lids that don't fit; sloping headlights on pattern wings; small rear lights and blade bumpers etc. Whatever happened to those '80's-'90's cars that were proud of their big square Euro bumpers and elephant foot lights?

I've seen the light now though and gone completely standard on my current VW – a 1972 Crossover Bay. It's even got the original Danbury interior still in it. I've kept it that way mainly because it was first registered six days after I was born, so we are both 'Ageing gracefully' together.

Great magazine, keep them coming. See you all at The *VolksWorld* Show.



It's hard to be sure Rob, but we think your Buggy could be a modified late Volksrod



Robert and Daisy Silvester, '63 Buggy

Hi. Firstly, great mag, I love it and have it sent to my house every month, so thought I'd send you a few pictures of my Buggy. It's based on a 1963 Beetle chassis, but the bodyshell is unknown and, after much research, I am still unable to find the model, so I thought your readers may be able to help identify it. I haven't seen one with headlights like these before, and it doesn't look like an aftermarket modification.

It needed some serious TLC when I bought it, so I have spent the last year slowly restoring it to its former glory, and have enjoyed every minute of owning it, working on it and driving it.

From the look of the car I think it would have been made in the '70s, and at its height would have been an awesome Buggy. Alas, the old chrome was rusted and the car looked a bit tired when I got it. But it's amazing what a little love, sweat, blood, cut knuckles and so

many hours polishing and painting can do. I want to keep the Buggy slightly used looking to try and keep some of its original look.

It has a 1600 twin-port engine with a standard Solex carb (which I up jetted) and a ceramic-coated mega cannon exhaust. It also has original '70's Appliance wheels and I've tried to keep as much of the original handmade '70's interior as possible, but unfortunately the original bucket seats were past their best, so I've added new clubman bucket seats. The carpets have been replaced with rubber matting and it has a yacht stereo fitted in the dashboard and waterproof speakers hidden behind the seats (a modern stereo just didn't look right in it). I've also made a new roof and done a few other bits here and there.

Then again, the rear looks different, even though it wears a Volksrod badge. Maybe James Hale can confirm. James?

I'd like to (being cheeky) say Hi to Volkyfolks (the VW club I'm in) and a big thank you to Shaun at Southwest Splitz for all his help!



Dom Seymour, '73 Beetle

Hi VolksWorld, first of all I wanted to say how much I am loving the magazine.

The car in the pictures is my very first Beetle, a 1973 called 'Roxy'. Due to her bright colour and flames, you can always be sure of receiving looks and smiles when out on a drive, and I never fail to find her in a busy car park! For a year now, I have been wanting to re-do the interior, but can't work out what colours will and won't work. After many samples, I am still no closer to working out whether to keep the interior as it is – with black seats, carpet and door cards – or to try something different. I am aware it is a personal decision, but if there is any colour combinations you would / wouldn't suggest that would be much appreciated! Also, do you know what wheels she's on?

Our advice Dom – get yourself over to the oracle that is www.b289.com



Derek Gardener, Beach Buggy

Hi, please find attached photos of my recent Buggy project.

I bought it in February 2014 as a part-finished project that needed tidying, but the tidying up got a little out of hand. To start with, the supermarket trolley 'cage' had to go, the wiring loom had to be changed, the lights, the front beam, the shock absorbers, the brakes... A new, custom-built, ali petrol tank has been fitted, a new fuse panel, washer bottle and I also replaced the steering column. All of the bodywork has been sanded back and repaired where needed, and I primed and painted it in the back garden in a gazebo! Inside, it's had new carpets, seats and harnesses fitted. It's also had a new windscreen, plus numerous other things, such as the chrome work on the engine. I would really like it featured in your mag. It would be a perfect end to the project.



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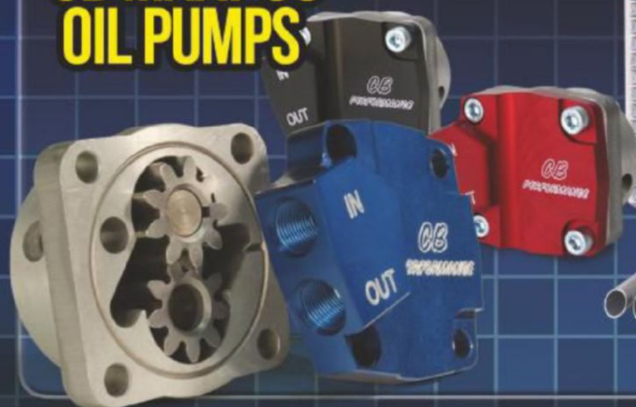
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Aussie rules

Not the game, but the rules by which the owner of this Oval Window plays by. And yes, he is from Australia

Words Cathal O'Toole Photos Rhyce Lucas





R

hyce Lucas is something of a rare creature by today's standards. Why so? Well, he is 26-years old and, as such, the presumed route for this young gent to follow with regards to his motor-propelled vehicle might more commonly

be one of a patina disposition, or one that is said to be 'dropped on earlies', but neither are the game our Sydney, Australia dweller plays. In fact, if there's one thing sure to rattle Master Lucas' cage, it's the presumption of normality and routine surrounding his life. Am I painting him as a wild child, or as someone who should call Bethlem his home? I hope not, because that's not my intention, but I do want you to see what someone can do when they stray from the flock and do what they want to do, not what they are expected to.

Working as a photographer and graphic designer, you could predict Rhyce was never going to do the 'same same but different' thing when it came to his first car, and he didn't. "I have always loved Beetles but, once I started thinking about a first car, I wanted it to be something memorable that also suited my slightly eccentric personality. I thought Beetles were off my list, but then I saw how affordable they were, at least until I became more aware of the finer nuances of each production model. Suddenly, my bar was raised, several times! Initially, I was happy enough to own any affordable and mechanically sound Beetle, but then it had to be a pre-'67. Then I decided I wanted something with semaphores, so that made it pre-'61, and then finally I decided I wouldn't settle for anything other than an Oval. That narrowed my choice down considerably, but when this '56 came up for sale, and once I saw it, I knew I had to have it."





◀ The suitcase that fools them all. A secondhand case with homemade stickers looks like it's been around the world, literally

➤ Details details and more details. Rhyce has got it spot on when it comes to period accessorising



▲ Car is an original Australian-built Oval and, as such, came with home market-sourced red leatherette seat covers. Note the Bus shifter extender, too

That was 2013, and Rhyce was now the proud owner of a 1956 Oval, which, luckily for him, was in pretty much the guise you see here, albeit not as shiny and not with as much historical trickery, but more about that later. The restoration had been completed by the owner prior to the person Rhyce bought the car from, who said he knew very little of the Oval's past. It's a shame not to know more as it would be nice to acknowledge the restorer. What we do know is that the Oval is an Australian-built car, and is matching numbers as far as body and chassis go, though sadly the original engine is long gone, replaced by one from a '58 Beetle. Rhyce admitted if the original motor was still in the car, it would have stayed bone stock but, as it wasn't, he felt guilt free about making a few modifications, with an eye to going down the Vintage Speed route in the future.

Cutting to the chase

So first off was the paint. In excellent condition already, Rhyce is a man who likes the noir, and sharing a driveway with a black 2007 Golf R32 he wasn't going to let the '56 show its age, so what followed was a barrage of cutting compounds, pastes, waxes, polishes, glazes, back to cutting compounds and more waxes and glazes. The results speak for themselves. As for the ride height, Rhyce explains: "I have entertained the idea of a narrowed beam and dropped spindles, but kinda feel like it

is on almost every Dubbers checklist now, so I'll probably keep riding high and proud! Maybe with the exception of some Koni shocks and Porsche finned brakes in the future."

Not wanting to go over the top with accessories, Rhyce is very aware that one too many is just too much. "It can make or break a car, and I hope I haven't taken it too far, I think I'm still in the safe zone." One of the most interesting things that came out of my conversation with Rhyce is his creative spirit and ingenuity. In the same way that you look at documentaries that show the secrets behind a magician's disappearing act, only to discover there's a hidden flap in the box, well, I'm about to reveal Rhyce's hidden flap in his box, so to speak. And to show how, with a little bit of ingenuity, you too can create this look without just buying the parts on an expensive shopping list. For example, Rhyce had planned on getting some Miller nipples fog lights but, in a rush to complete the car for a show, ended up compromising with some run-of-the-mill amber fog lights. No matter, to mimic the look of Millers he ground and polished some steel buttons and mounted them on the glass. My favourite accessory, or trick, depending on your viewpoint, has to be the leather bonnet strap, which was an old belt that was too big for Rhyce, so he cut it to size and utilised existing holes in the belt to fit under the mounting bolt for the bonnet handle.



**“I hope I haven’t
taken it too far, I
think I’m still in the
safe zone”**



▲ The '58-vintage 30-horse motor is proving reliable, but Rhyce has plans to up the power output and give it a more sporty feel with early Porsche ancillaries



To freshen up the interior, Rhyce re-polished the paint on the dashboard and all the trim. The steering wheel and column was also polished before a lace-up grip was added for that period look. The use of a Bus shifter extender is another neat touch, as is the tunnel basket with vintage Coke bottle, which Rhyce uses as his water bottle when he's on the move. The 1950's Eveready torch is a swapmeet score, while the chrome demister vents are homemade. Rhyce: "I went for it with the interior. In the glovebox I have various vintage Sydney road maps and an NRMA road safety booklet from the 1950s, a Schrader valve cap tin with spare caps and the *crème de la crème* accessory for the 1950's automobilist – a pair of leather driving gloves, important when holding onto the wheel for your life when flailing, pitching or rolling around a corner any faster than 8mph!"

Most of the tags and floor mats carry the Motorways name, which was a dealership that operated from 1956-1968 in Rhyce's neighbourhood. As he feels he has missed out on the Beetle's history,

he has created its own with parts like the Motorways of Rockdale dealership courtesy matchbox. "I remember reading some 1950's literature stating that the time necessary for letting the VW motor warm up can be determined by the time taken to smoke a cigarette." [To clarify, that was John Muir's advice in 1969 in his seminal *How To Keep Your Volkswagen Alive* manual-MP]. The service mats came about when Rhyce was on one of his many daily hunts on thesamba.com, and spotted some German dealer ones for sale at an eye-watering \$300. Having an A3 printer of his own, he made up his own Motorways of Rockdale mats, complete with Mr. Bubblehead, on some carefully aged paper. Likewise, the suitcase travel labels, pin-up stickers, tool kit decals and all the printed media that adorns the car, they're all Rhyce's own work. "They were another session of printing insanity, but worth all the effort as people ask me all the time where I got the suitcase, thinking the labels are all original. Nobody has yet suspected they're fake, despite my Lukazink Photography skull logo being peppered all over them."

TECH INFO

BODY Stock 1956 Oval, in L41 Black / Ruby Red

SUSPENSION Stock

WHEELS AND TYRES Stock

two-tone solids; 155 radials with whitewall flaps

ENGINE 1958 30-horse, with dress-up kit

INTERIOR Australian-spec leatherette, Bus shifter extender, Aus-only kp/h speedo sticker

“All the printed media
that adorns the car... all
Rhyce’s own work”



◀ Rhyce did the photoshoot himself in the car park of Bunnings at midnight. Apparently, the cops were called when reports came in of a man in a deserted car park taking photos of an old car!



◀ Since the shoot, the radial spare and all the tyres have been replaced with new whitewalls. You can just make out the OEM-style warning sticker for the ‘kinkmaster latch’

▲ The reproduction Lietz sticker adds further vintage feel to this Oval. Don’t get Rhyce started on the rope knots though, unless you’ve got time to spare!



“Taken to another level with clever ideas and attention to detail”

Another neat touch is the Lietz sticker on the roof rack that Rhyce re-worked from an original image and then printed himself. Speaking of roof racks, have a look at the cotton rope that Rhyce searched high and low for. The frayed ends were terminated with a yachtsman’s ‘whipping knot’ and the fastening knots have the same amount of turns at both ends. We love that attention to detail, which all goes towards an overall look that just works.

Having a stroke

Ask Rhyce about the boot area, and his first response is to apologise for the “hideous radial spare.” But to be honest most eyes are drawn to the spare wheel tool kit, complete with owner printed and aged Hazet and Jorg tool stickers. The original Bilstein jack was covered in flaky silver paint so, being the detail-orientated person he is, Rhyce spent a weekend sanding, polishing and painting the jack by hand. Another Rhyce special is the warning label on the fuel tank. “I was sick of nearly having a stroke every time someone would go to pull the bonnet down with the hood latch, or ‘kinkmaster latch’ as I like to call it, so I made up a sticker to warn them.”

The engine is as Rhyce got it with “more bling than Liberace” thanks to the louvred stainless firewall cover and various dress-up parts, but he’s currently collecting parts like mushroom air filters, a Fram filter and a Porsche oil filler to make it look more like a pre-A vintage Porsche motor. The plan is to make it go more like a vintage Porsche too, with a port and polish of the cylinder heads, high ratio rockers, a cam swap and an Abarth exhaust.

That’s all for the future though, for now Lucas has just succeeded in taking what most would deem a finished car to another level with little more than clever ideas and attention to detail. ■



▲ An A3 printer, a career in graphic design and some trickery to age the paper (but sadly no punctuation book!-MP) and Rhyce saved himself \$300!

➤ “My belt was too big and wasn’t going to be keeping any pants of mine up, so I cut it down and used the existing holes to mount it to the bonnet – instant Vintage Speed accessory for free,” says Rhyce



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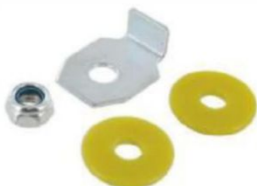
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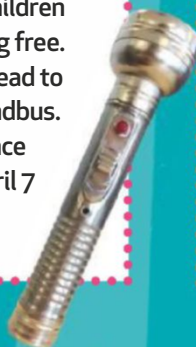
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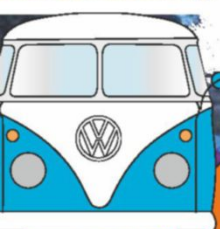


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We're lining up the perfect mix of music to soundtrack your medieval moment. This doesn't mean banging techno that will leave your ears ringing, but a great selection that will get everyone from the tiniest tots to the most glamorous grans up on their feet.

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Your furry friends are more than welcome at the show, after all they're the bravest little dragons to have by your side for the weekend. Train them up so they can compete in our dog agility test, or dress them up for the best-dressed dog competition.

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Yes, you can all be the hero in your own fairy tale this weekend, but the real stars of the show are the VW Transporters, in all their guises, plus the air-cooled Beetle of course. With a show 'n' shine, club displays and some special crown jewels too, your starring role will be stolen from you with one swipe. If you're coming to the show, check out the website to find out how your Van can participate in the action



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Life imitating art

A tragic accident proved the catalyst for Carl Parker to turn Brian Flannery's rendition of a wild custom Trekker into reality

Words Mike Pye Photos Dan Pullen



D

oing something truly different with a Volkswagen these days is difficult, for two reasons: firstly, just about everything has been done, and secondly, of late there has been a definite move away from what can broadly be termed custom VWs. So much so that sometimes the much needed breath of fresh air has to come from outside the established VW order. Carl Parker of Panel Craft in Purley, Surrey is no stranger to VWs. Far from it. He painted a two-tone Resto Cal Oval that featured in our January 1991 issue, before the term Resto Cal had even been invented. Though many of his close friends were into VWs back then, Carl had his sights set on a Porsche 356, eventually managing to acquire and fully restore a '59 T2 Cabriolet, which we featured in March '97. From there, Carl moved up to a genuine Speedster, but sold that to keep moving forward with a house restoration: "I get a lot more use out of the double glazing in my house than I ever did out of that car,"

he laughs. "After all the Porsche stuff, and the expense of them, I just wanted to buy something cheap. I saw an advert for this ex-army Trekker and Tim [Carter] and I drove 285 miles to Llandudno to see it. It wasn't as good as

it looked in the pictures, so I bid him £1,500 and we drove it back. That was 15 years ago."

As anyone who has ever driven a Trekker (or a Type 181, to give it its correct European name) will know, you either love the experience or you hate it. Everyone looks at you, most laugh at you, and you can't help but laugh yourself. Forget Beach Buggies, these are VW's factory fun car. But what set him on the path to a Trekker in the first place? "You!" Carl replies emphatically. "Who me?" I said innocently. "Yeah, you brought round that picture of Jonas' one, and that got me started." To better explain, Jonas Uhland in Sweden built a custom Trekker in the late '90s, lowering it, chroming the windscreen frame, adding leopard print seat covers and Sprint Stars and painting it desert beige. It was cool and, more importantly, it was affordable cool.

Full of ideas

About five years later, a young lad named Brian Flannery knocked on Carl's door looking for work. "He stayed for a couple of weeks, smoked a shit load of weed and drew a lot of pictures in his bedroom," remembers Carl. I remember Brian well too, as I also did time at Carl's in my, ahem, troubled phase. He was always full of ideas, and we shared a passion for custom cars. Carl: "Brian carried on coming down here at weekends to give me a hand, and he and Tim would get all buffy about what we could do with the car. They'd





▲ The handmade hood by Martin at County Coachtrimmers in Essex is a work of art, with exquisite leather and brass buckles. It was the most expensive part of the car, but worth every penny

“It was cool and, more importantly, it was affordable cool”

come up with all these ideas, and I’d just say, ‘fuck off, I don’t want another box of bits.’” One trick they kept coming back to was suicide doors, but Carl was having none of it, though he did concede to buy a set of original Ansen Sprints with Goodyear Polyglas rear tyres off Steve ‘the prof’ Watkins, though for years they just sat gathering dust on the top of Carl’s spray booth. Frustrated, Brian let rip with his marker pens and produced a rendition of how he envisaged the fully customised Trekker. Shortly after, he was knocked off his motorbike on the way down to Carl’s one morning and killed. “It was devastating news,” recalls Carl. “He was all excited about a motorbike trip he was planning with his pals, and suddenly he was gone.” That was in the summer of 2008. “After the funeral, I put his pictures of the Trekker on the wall. I kept looking at them and just decided one day, ‘fuck it, I’ll try and build it like that, in Brian’s memory.’”

Cast of thousands

Tim was into the idea, I was into it and anyone else that knew Brian was too, so slowly the project started to evolve. I borrowed the car for a weekend and fitted the 1950 Pontiac tail lights. Tim got busy on the subtle body mods, such as removing the

indicators from the front wing tops and frenching in some Karmann Ghia bullet indicators, while Carl fitted the 2CV headlights, “just because they worked really well.” James Wooton at VeeDub in Welling lowered the car for Carl and all the while it remained in pretty much daily use. Eventually, though, Carl caved into peer pressure and agreed to split the body from the ‘pan so the floorpan could be repaired and detailed. It was seven years before the car was back up and running again. In that time, the car had to play second, or third, fiddle to customers’ cars, but the suicide door conversion that was so much part of Brian’s concept was eventually done, but proved to be considerably harder to do in metal than it was to draw on paper. To get the proportions right, the front doors were cut in half vertically and lengthened using new formed sections made up with the correct

TECH INFO

BODY: 1971 Type 181; two-doored, chopped ‘screen and hood, ‘50 Pontiac tail lights, 2CV headlights
ENGINE: 1600 single port; twin 341CT Webers; one-off stainless steel exhaust
SUSPENSION: Beetle spindles; beam adjusters; IRS conversion; turned spring plates
WHEELS AND TYRES: Original Ansen Sprints; 135 Michelin ZX, E60-15 Goodyear Polyglas
INTERIOR: Silly ali bomber seats; handmade rear seat; sapele duck boards; diamond stitch leather trim

swage lines in, they were also swapped side for side so the factory lock and hinge mechanisms could be retained (though not the door handles), the b-posts moved back accordingly are the remains of the rear doors welded shut. “That’s the trouble with stuff like this,” says Carl wistfully, “you forget, don’t you? I remember at times standing just looking at it, thinking ‘am I ever going to be able to do this?’ It was shit loads of work just to do those doors.” But they had to be done, for Brian. Simply painting it as he’d drawn it and lowering it might have given a similar effect, but that wasn’t the point.

Other custom tricks performed by ace welder / fabricator Tim were to cut back and wire all the wing edges for additional clearance, to delete the front number plate plinth and the ugly bumper brackets at the rear and to chop the front ‘screen. Working from a rendition, a cartoonish one at that, didn’t give any useful points of reference for the latter job so, after much deliberating, it was just cut. “It looked shocking when Tim first did it,” recalls Carl, “and, to be honest, it didn’t really all come together until the hood was done, but when I went to pick it up from

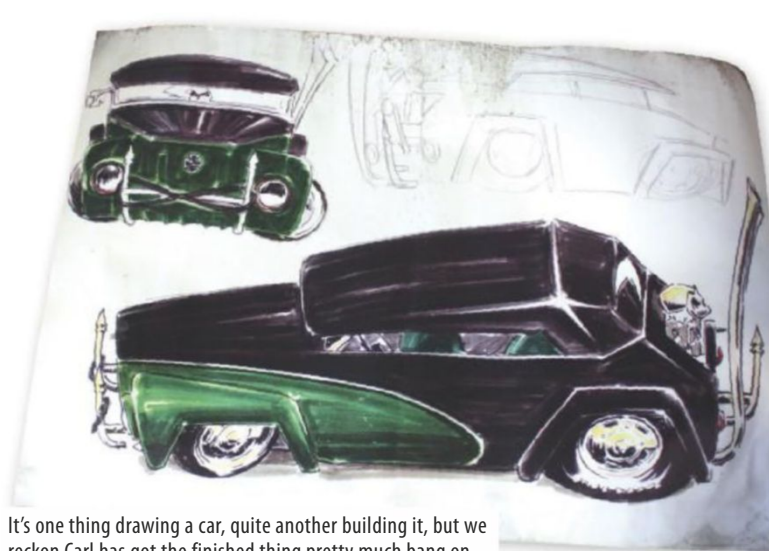
the trimmers it looked just like Brian’s drawing.” Needless to say, the hood frame not only had to be cut down, but lengthened as well, both to ensure it looked aesthetically pleasing and so it still works as a hood. “That was a shit load more work,” says Carl, sort of, but still not quite laughing about it all.

I can take a little more credit / blame for both the use of a Fridolin steering wheel and the stupid seats in the car, as I had a second set cut and folded for Carl at the same time I had the ones made for my Oval by Fintan at FH Ellis Coachworks. Tim then rivetted extra strengthening gussets to them and they’re fitted to the VW





'Screen frame has been chopped 5½ inches, then chrome plated, which meant the roof needed lengthening to suit



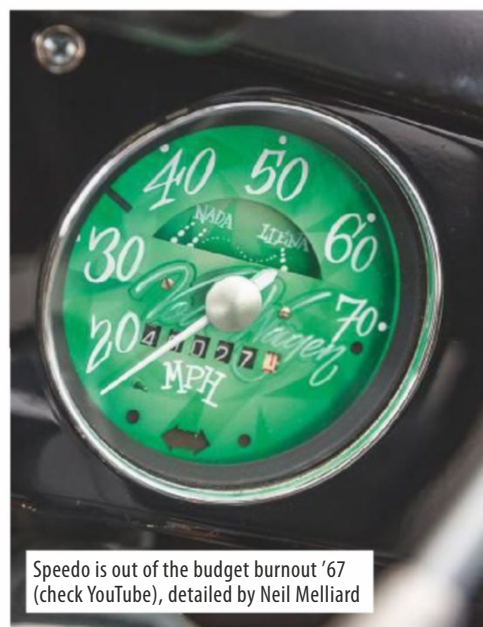
It's one thing drawing a car, quite another building it, but we reckon Carl has got the finished thing pretty much bang on



Evil clown on the front nerf is actually a House of Hoyer gear knob



Nerf bars were handmade, as was the s/s exhaust, loosely modelled on the stock part



Speedo is out of the budget burnout '67 (check YouTube), detailed by Neil Melliard



Not only has this Trekker been suicide doored, but there's only two of 'em! Folding, chopped rear seat is a one-off



Fridolin steering wheel sits on an Oval column, with an Oval indicator switch



Ghia bullet indicators are frenched in, but did you spot the 2CV headlights?





▲ Paint is Mercedes black with House of Bruvva Flash Ultimate Cosmic Fantastic Outrageous Green scallop. Neil Melliard did the engine turned gold leaf break

◀ A great deal of consideration went into the rear window size. Compare this to a stock one

▲ Carl didn't have a grey hair on his head when he started this project. Now look at the state of his barnet

◀ There's a surprising amount of work in what, at first glance, appears to be a very basic interior. Dash is now two piece, with a handmade glovebox door; sapele duck boards and door caps by Mike the wood are lovely, as is the leather trim by Wayne Calloway

seat frames on ali blocks at the front so they hinge forwards and 'sprung' on VW valve springs at the rear. With the new, lower front seats and chopped roof, the rear seat had to be dropped accordingly, but again it wasn't as simple as that. In fact, it's a completely scratch built, folding frame – more of Tim's nifty work – with wooden insert panels, padded with foam and trimmed by Wayne Calloway.

From design to reality

The final piece of the puzzle that would really make it or break it was the paint. Being a car painter by trade, this should have been the easiest part of the project for Carl, and prepping it all and laying on the Mercedes straight black was all in a (few) day's work for him, but translating Brian's scallop design into reality was far from straightforward. Days were spent masking up scallop designs, standing back, looking at it, re-shaping the curve and garnering opinions. In truth, most people said it wouldn't work on such a slab-sided vehicle, but they were wrong. In the end, it took the talented eye of Neil Melliard at Prosign to pull the masking tape into shape before Carl sprayed the xirallac pearl green, custom mixed on an ICI sparkling aluminium base. "It took six or seven heavy coats to cover," recalls Carl, "but it instantly transformed the car."

About the only thing not replicated in some form from the drawing was the exhaust, which I think even Brian would admit might have been a step too

far. "Once we'd put the nerf bars on and added some of the little details, I think I pretty much got it, didn't I?" asks Carl modestly.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given what I said earlier about the move away from custom VWs, it's been from outside VW circles that the best reactions to the finished car have come. "I don't really know, but there seems to be a lot of conformity amongst VW people these days, and a reluctance to change. It's had a much better response from the hot rodders and American car guys, as well as from people that don't know anything about cars.

I don't know what that really says about it.

"What I do know is it was a ridiculous amount of work and, although it was all done in house, it still added up, especially all the little bits needed to finish it. When I took it to The *VolksWorld* Show last year, looking at all the other cars there, and how well they're

done, I could have made it better, but that wasn't what it was about. And at least I know I can jump in this and drive it. I think we've all done Brian proud, and hopefully it's a fitting tribute to him, and our memories of him."

Thanks: Tim Carter, Jez Parsons, Mike the wood, Wayne Calloway, Mike Pye, Mister Tee, Colin at Allglass, Tony 'Nobby', Steve Watkins, Gav at House of Bruvva, Andy Davis, Chris Wood, Neil Melliard, Tony at Foxley Motors, Martin at County Coachtrimmers, Roy at RB Polishing. And Brian. Nice one brother.

"It didn't really all come together until the hood was done"

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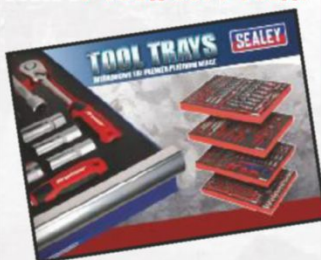
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Twisted logic

You live in Dubai, you own a collection of exotic sports cars, you commission a beaten-up Bay Window Camper. Er, why?

Words Mike Pye Photos thru-a-lupe photographic







When he couldn't have Ben Lewis' Bus, the next best thing was a replica of it. As such, this Bay also has a 45mm beam raise (with added caster), flipped link pin spindles, chassis notches front and rear, tubs front and rear, Creative Engineering spring plates, horseshoe plates and a pair of Airlift 2500 air bags. The major difference is this one has a Volks Project twin air bag front beam and stock front shock absorbers

In my experience, people that are into air-cooled VWs tend to be *just* into air-cooled VWs, though often with a side order of early Porsche for good measure. Some may move on in life and out of VWs, frequently into the aforementioned Porsches, or sometimes into other facets of the modified car world – hot rods, retro Fords, early English oddities etc. I have to say, though, that Phil McGovern is the first VW owner I have come into contact with that is equally as passionate about Jaguars as he is about VWs and Porsches. “I think it's the whole Coventry thing. My dad worked in the Middle East when I was little, so we lived out there – Saudi, Qatar, Dubai – but when he moved us back to the UK when I was 15 or 16, it was to Kenilworth. There, as a car-obsessed teenager, I would see some of the cars that belonged to people who must have been quite high up in Jaguar. I was hooked. I ended up getting a summer job working at the factory and then, through their graduate scheme, was funded through the third year of my business and management degree by them. My first job with them was in the sales and marketing department, where I fell on my feet as I ended up shadowing, and driving around, the UK sales and marketing manager. I just kept my mouth shut and my ears open, and everything has kind of gone from there.” When we say everything, even after an hour on the 'phone to Phil in Dubai, I'm not entirely clear what 'everything' is but, suffice to say, he seems to be doing okay for himself, and has amassed an enviable collection of cars from the three aforementioned marques in the process. “I'm a sucker for anything air-cooled, and anything Jag. I just can't get the interest in anything else.” Since Phil was bought a '72 Beetle by his dad for his 17th birthday, his back catalogue has seen him work through Ovals, double-door Splits, Bays and early big windows, culminating in the ex-Mike Hunsaker, Cal Look '63 Beetle, a car he describes as his dream VW. When he decided 10 years ago to make the move

TECH INFO

BODY: Stock 1968 Westfalia; Brumos Porsche-inspired stripes and logos; tubs front and rear

INTERIOR: Stock, original Westfalia pop-top, with re-trimmed seats; VW Heritage Race Trim highback buckets

ENGINE: 1776cc twin port; dual 40 Dell'Ortos; raised 11/2 inches

GEARBOX: Stock, but raised 1 1/2 inches

BRAKES: Stock drums all round

WHEELS AND

TYRES: 5 x 15-inch Mooneyes Speed Masters; 165/50 and 185/65 tyres

back out to the Middle East (at the time to run Jaguar's after sales department in Dubai), the dream Bug was moved on to a new home, but the Porsche 912 went with him and, suffice to say, the collection has grown from there. So what, we were intrigued, does a man with more than one Jaguar supercar to his name and a selection of desirable Porsches want with a gnarly old Bay Window Bus? “My work takes up all my time – it's one of those no sleep kind of things. Coffee, cigarettes and bags under your eyes. My cars are my route to freedom and fun. And whilst they're a lot of fun for me, I really needed something that was a family retreat.” That family comprises Phil's wife, Emma, and his two sons, Charley (8) and Max (6). Throw in the fact that summer temperatures in Dubai average around the 41degC mark, and the need to get away from it all for a while becomes even more apparent.

Bought not built

Being an old Spa Dubs member from way back, Phil knew Ben Lewis long before he became Evil Ben (www.evilbens.co.uk) and so it was only natural he should be the

one he contacted about buying a Bus, especially as he had first-hand knowledge of Ben's work, being the current owner of Ben's old 'Fendered '57' Oval. “Spannering has never been a big thing to me. I'd like to do it, but I learned years ago that you don't build a car, you buy a car and tweak it to how you want it, then you don't take the hit on the build. Having said that, I have recently bought a 2014 Triumph Bonneville,





No aftermarket wood rim here, just the stock, perfectly fit for purpose Bay tiller. Extra oil gauges give added peace of mind



One other difference to Ben's Bus is the fuel filler doesn't run down through the wardrobe



VW Heritage Race Trim highbacks were chosen for their dimensions and their old man comfort



Original Westy interior was in decent condition, but Phil wanted the seats re-trimmed in red. There are big plans afoot for this area though



Inspired by Brumos Porsches, the red and blue stripes really liven up the otherwise plain white Westy



10-4 good buddy (seat)



Discreet sponsor logos were also lifted from the inspirational Porsches

■ '68 WESTFALIA

“I wanted a relatively stock looking Bus, but silly”





◀ With the brief being that the Bus should comfortably house a family of four on lengthy summer road trips, a pop-top Westy was just the ticket

✓ It's another half cap! This one has 185/65s on the rear on Mooneyes Speed Master wheels

✓ Front tubs are necessary for wheelarch clearance, and because of the 45mm beam raise this Bus has been subjected to



▲ Twin Easy Street air pressure gauges monitor front and rear air pressures

◀ Though it may not look it, this is pretty much a fully restored Bus, with everything underneath new, just wearing its original paint and interior with pride

which I have stripped down and am going to try and learn on."

And so the call was put into Ben: "Ere Ben, Early Westy. I've got a budget in mind, let's do something silly. What can we do?" If you speak with Ben, however, the conversation went a little bit more like, "Ere Ben, *your* Early Westy. I've got a budget in mind, how much will it take to buy it?" "I told him in no uncertain terms that it was *my* Bus and it wasn't for sale, for any amount," says Ben, "but how about we build you something similar, exactly the way you want it?" As luck would have

it, Ben knew of a mildly modified '68 Westy for sale just down the road that would be the perfect base vehicle. They discussed the plan and Phil's criteria, which were pretty straightforward: "I wanted a relatively stock looking Bus, but silly. It needed to be on the deck, but completely useable and able to house myself, two kids and a wife.

"Lo and behold, I now have a Bus that sits on the floor, that we drove 1,600 miles from Warwick to Monaco and back last summer in without any problems and looks exactly as I envisaged it."

Obviously, somewhere between that first 'phone call and that first road trip, Ben had to do all the work to make the Bus look, and sit, the way it does, which entailed replicating the chassis work that has

been done on his own Bus (see *VolksWorld* February 2014 issue). The only significant difference is the front beam, which in this case is a twin inboard airbag beam from Volks Project in The Netherlands. "I put it in at about 10-degrees caster to make it nice to drive at speed," explains Ben, "but the bags are acting against the leaves, so you need about 80psi in them to get the front to lift, and because the front end of a Bus is so light, it's like driving on concrete." Phil concurs: "It's nothing like Ben's Bus to drive, but I actually don't think it's too bad. And I don't see that as a bad thing anyway, I see it as an opportunity... With the 1776 motor, it'll happily sit at 80mph all day long, and I did just that coming back from the Dordogne last summer."

The Brumos connection

Though Ben took care of all the mechanical work, there were numerous decisions to be made on parts and finishing details. "I like that bit of the process," says Phil, "calling Ben up, discussing stuff, coming up with ideas for the overall look of the Bus. A lot of that look comes from the stripes, the inspiration for which, contrary to popular belief, didn't come from a tube of toothpaste, but from the Brumos Porsches (see www.brumosracing.com). "I've always has a hankering for old race cars of the '60s and '70s – you know, before sponsorship ruined the look of them – and a lot of the old Porsche racing teams used VW Buses as support vehicles and the like. I made an assumption (it's not true by the way) that the drivers might then also have slept in Westy Campers in



“I just turned up, turned the key and drove off”

the pits, so the idea is that the Bus looks like a Brumos Porsche support vehicle.” The Mooneyes Speedmaster

wheels were always part of the plan, simply because Phil loves them, but he concedes to really complete the look the Bus should be on Porsche steels (yes!) or Fuchs (yawn), so there's every chance these may be changed.

▲ What do you reckon? Keep it on the Speed Masters or go to Fuchs, or Porsche steels? The latter gets my vote

Design Icon

Apart from a re-trim on the seats, the nicely original camping interior is as the Bus came, but Phil has some elaborate plans for this that Ben may or may not yet know about. “The long-term goal is to keep the A-surface [that's the exterior paintwork] exactly as it is, but take everything else back and make it perfect and more modern under the skin. The Westy interior is great, but there's still tons of wasted space, so you could do something really clever using modern materials and technology without detracting from the original form. Something along the lines of what Icon (www.icon4x4.com) in LA do with old trucks.”

For the time being, Phil and his family are just using the Westy for what it was designed for – at least they are when they are back in the UK in the summers, the rest of the time it sits around doing nothing, which Phil admits he feels slightly guilty about. “I keep saying to people to take it out and use it, but no one will, so we're looking into shipping it to the US and leaving it there. I have an office in LA and mates out there, so they could use it. I like to pile the miles on all my cars, and to me the worst thing in the world is for it to be just sitting there.”

In the end, the Bus came in at around 22 grand, which, as both Phil and Ben will tell you, is less than



Phil offered Ben for his own Bus so, in a twisted logic kind of way, he's actually saved money having this Bus built. On the service he received from Ben, Phil gushed, “He's amazing. He's the most single minded, anally retentive person I've ever met. He actually gets personally offended when things don't work, so I just turned up, turned the key and drove off.”

“What I really like about this Bus though is that I don't have to worry about it, or tell the kids off for knocking into it, or throwing stones near it, and that's not something I can say about any of my other cars.” Maybe that's it then, maybe that's the real reason why someone with a Beetle that recently won ‘Best in Dubai’ in the Dubai Classic Car Show, a couple of RS Porsches and a brace of Jaguar supercars really gets their kicks from what to most people looks like nothing more than an old Bus in need of a paint job. In a weird kind of way, I guess it all kind of makes sense. I did say kind of... ■

▲ The 1776cc motor was a touch as it was an unknown quantity that came with the Bus but is proving to be a peach. The bumper sticker is ironic

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■ '82 MEXICAN BEETLE



Future proof

When Alain Ritchie started the build of this Mexican Beetle, he knew one day he'd be adding some extra power. So, with that in mind, he made a few provisions...

Words Matt Keene Photos Tom Gidden



A

Alain hails from Newbury in West Berkshire and is a business consultant by profession and founder of a company called www.motivo.cc, which has developed an iPhone app that provides virtual coaching for indoor cycling. He has had a string of VWs to his name, including many Bays and Bugs, but is the first to admit that he never really got to drive any of them. Why? Well, you see he likes to tinker and, by his own admission, didn't really have a clue what he was doing back then. "I kind of pulled them apart and never really put them back together, so they were all sold on as unfinished projects," chuckles Alain. Yet, clearly this Beetle is evidence that, somewhere along the line, Alain got wise to the intricate art of putting a car back together again. His metamorphosis from zero to hero started whilst he was at university in Leeds – supposedly studying hard – and is a lesson to us all that anyone can achieve anything if they put their mind to it. "This car first came into the picture at VW Action in 2006," recalls Alain. "We – that's Gareth and Jen Birch and I – were trading under the banner of Slook Designs and were situated next to the cars for sale area."



Black door handles are a VW Mexico standard item, but Alain decided to take the black theme further with black pop-outs, body trim, wheels and bumpers, too

Gareth and Jen decided to mooch around the cars to see if there was anything that might take their fancy and, within a couple minutes, had agreed a deal on a tidy little late Bug.”

The big Cheese

The car was collected the following weekend and had some considerable history attached to it. It was a 1982 Mexican Beetle that had been ordered for German domestic use and then imported into the UK by a company called Stephen W Wright in Lancashire in that same year. They sub-contracted a company in Cheltenham to perform a right-hand drive conversion, before selling the car on to a chap

called Howard Cheese, the founder of the Mexican and Brazilian Beetle Registry).

Howard kept the Bug for several years, and attended many shows in it, where he and other fellow club members keenly showed off their South American Beetles.

Howard is still involved in the club today, and now runs a website dedicated to the promotion of friendship amongst owners of VW models built outside Germany (www.mexibug.org.uk). As such, throughout the restoration, Alain contacted Howard on several occasions, not only for advice, but also for further history on the car to add to his portfolio.

Jen and Gareth's ownership of the Mexibug was fairly short lived. Jen used it as her daily for a while, but eventually tired of it breaking down due to a seemingly ever-present fuel line blockage. Gareth decided to tinker and, according to Alain, “For no good reason, turned molehill into mountain, deciding to strip the car down to bare metal.”

His reasoning for this was that the Bug was suffering from micro-blistering – a malady that is fairly common on South American Beetles – so the strip down was, in a way, warranted. Alain offered his limited experience as he was ever keen to learn on the job, and he and Gareth spent the

TECH INFO

BODY: 1982

Mexican Beetle

ENGINE:

Standard 1300cc twin port; MSD Blaster coil and 6-AL ignition

INTERIOR:

Standard seats re-covered with black TMI seat covers; Vintage Speed shifter with Kamei 'golf ball' gear knob; Formula V steering wheel

WHEELS AND

TYRES: 15 x 4.5J and 15 x 5.5J Porsche 356C / 912 steels wheels vapour blasted and powder coated in gloss black; Kumho KH11 Ecsta 155/60 and 195/65 tyres

next 12 months working on the car on Gareth's driveway, with the aim of giving it a new coat of paint, a new set of wheels and an improved stance. Once stripped, it became apparent that it was very solid, without a single spot of rust anywhere. Alain gives credit to the meticulous previous owner, Howard, for this as it was obviously cherished all of its life. It was during this time that Alain mentioned one day he would like to own the car.

The work carried out whilst at Gareth's may not sound particularly comprehensive, but when you are working on a driveway with limited resources, things are far from simple. Especially when, as our intrepid duo were, you are learning as you go. However, Gareth and Alain managed to re-do the right-hand-drive dash conversion as they felt it hadn't been executed as well as it could have been. They also stripped the floorpans back to bare metal and resprayed them, then fitted a three-inch narrowed and adjustable beam with dropped spindles to appease the stance police. The Bug then sat for a few months, due to Gareth and

Jen's impending wedding, and all the planning and malarkey that goes with tying the knot.

Logical solution

Winter 2008 approached, and reality hit Gareth – it was time to sell. There was only one logical solution – Alain should buy it. And that's exactly what he did, with great pleasure. So, in December 2008, the Bug came out of storage in Leeds. The problem was Alain lived nearly 200 miles away in Newbury. “Due to a lack of garage space at home, I was originally planning to complete the rebuild up in Leeds, travelling up there at weekends





Inside, Alain has added an original Formula Vee steering wheel and a Vintage Speed shifter with Kamei golf ball knob



Even the speedo was stripped down and given a healthy dose of detail, Alain replacing the glass, painting the bezel and re-set the odometer to zero



A quick glance through the pop-out rear window reveals an accessory parcel shelf with top quality speakers



Blackened-out headlamp rims and Euro Look headlight reflectors add to the stealth GT look



Black basket weave plastic seats have been given a fresh TMI re-trim. Warning: don't wear shorts in the summer!



to work on it. But, as you can imagine, progress was slow," he recalls. "I then had a bit of a moment, and came to the conclusion that

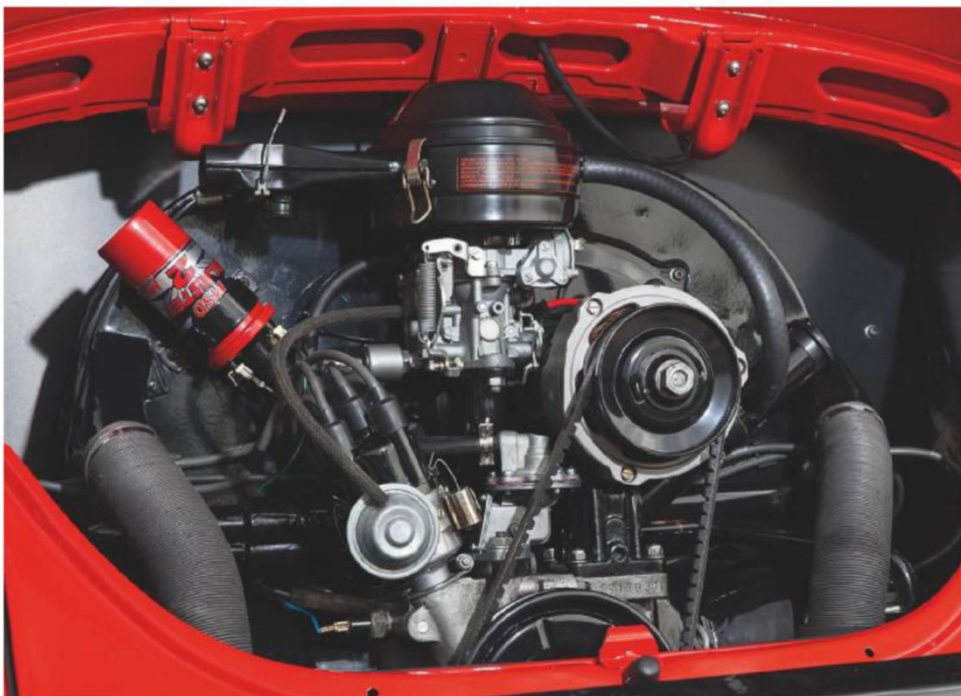
I was never going to be able to paint the body myself – especially with no experience in paintwork, a 400-mile round trip between me and the car, and an unhealthy appetite for perfection." Alain therefore decided to out source the paint job to Seddon-Atkins in Leeds. Although he says they did a fantastic job, he invested a further 150 hours in teaching himself paintwork detailing and applying it to the Mexibug in order to get the finish he desired.

Alain's work space fortune changed in the summer of 2010 when he had moved to a house with a single garage. He then collected the chassis from Leeds, sent it straight off for shot blasting and then off to Automanics for the installation of IRS inner brackets, as part of a master future proof plan, which included installing two runs of rigid 8mm fuel line for a proposed fuel injected motor.

Luton to Leeds

At the start of 2011, Alain had the chassis ready for the body, so he hired a Luton-bodied van to head off to Leeds one last time to collect the freshly painted 'shell. As you can imagine, the mission was a little scary: two blokes, a van, a nice, shiny

▲ The Beetle's radical, nose-down stance is easily tweaked, thanks to air shocks on the front and adjustable spring plates



▲ Presently, a stock 1300 twin port motivates the Bug, but plans are for a fuel injected, big cc motor in the future

➤ Black steels are where it's at. These ones are Porsche 356C / 912 versions





body and the middle of an icy winter is not for the faint of heart, especially when you are unloading said item at 2am, extremely tired after a mammoth road trip. Fortunately, things went smoothly and, with the body now at home, Alain could concentrate on the rebuild. "I spent hundreds, if not thousands, of hours restoring and detailing parts of the car no one will ever see, but that's not the point – I know it's there and it makes me happy!" For example, he spent a week of nights lying on his back removing the factory underseal from the bulkhead so he could then re-apply a new coat, only this time safe in the knowledge the texture would be identical to the other areas he had done, such as above the gearbox and the underside of the chassis. Here's another example: he purchased three pairs of Hella US-spec tail light lenses so he could choose the best lenses from the three sets. He then spent hours wet sanding and polishing the chosen ones to remove any imperfections in the plastic. You've got it bad, boy! Then there's Alain's quest for new windows all round. After much research, he discovered the parts he needed could easily be sourced individually, and reasonably cheaply, but from multiple

"No one will ever see, but that's not the point"

vendors, so instead he chose to buy through Machine 7, the only company that could supply him with a complete set, even though they were more expensive. I quizzed his logic, and the answer was simple, at least to anyone with a doctorate in detailing: "The

logos had to match as a set. I knew if I bought them individually, I would possibly have ended up with Siglias, Sekurits and who knows what else. The devil is in the detail," he says, without even a hint of irony.

Achilles' heel

The car's maiden voyage was going to be to the Deva Dubs show in 2014. Alain had the car finished, but soon found out its Achilles' heel in that, once loaded up, the Bug's framehead ground out terribly. "There was an issue with the welded-in adjusters being set too low. Even when fully raised, the car still ground out." Not one to let things get him down (excuse the pun), he installed some air shocks sourced from the US, and re-scheduled the debut for Dub Odyssey in Rotherham. On that journey, ride height wasn't an issue, but an old problem came back to bite Alain. "I couldn't believe it," he says. "The very same issue that pulled the Bug off the road all those years ago reared its ugly head again." However, this time his new girlfriend, Laura, suggested he remove the fuel pump and check it, and by pumping the fuel pump by hand he was able to cure a vapour lock that had been the cause of all the problems and make it to the show. "That was the moment I realised she was a keeper." We assume he's referring to Laura! ■

'82 MEXICAN BEETLE

THE BUILD

Originally owned by the Chairman of the Mexican and Brazilian Beetle Register, Howard Cheese, Alain came by the Bug through good friends, Gareth and Jen

Birch, at VW Action in 2006. The Beetle was in excellent condition, but with micro-blistered paintwork. Gareth and Alain started the 'mini restoration' in 2008. It took six years...

> Howard Cheese bought this Mexibug in 1982. A keen VW hobbyist, he cherished the Beetle throughout his ownership



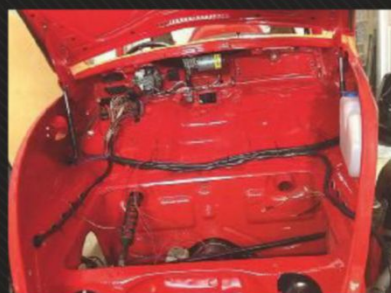
< Once stripped back to bare metal, it was apparent the Beetle was totally rust free. All it needed was a fresh coat of paint to bring it back up to scratch

> Alain spent a week on his back with scrapers and solvent to strip the front bulkhead. Note the lack of body colour paint, and the left and right-hand drive steering column holes



< The rolling chassis just prior to being reunited with the bodyshell. Notice the two rigid fuel pipes – part of a future plan that includes a bigger capacity engine

> Under the bonnet it's all been detailed in a way Mexican Bugs never were from the factory. The bulkhead has now been given a coat of stone chip and body colour



< The front and rear brakes are still drums, but now Porsche pattern 5 x 130 PCD. Adjustable spring plates make tweaking the rear ride height a doddle

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DIY PRICE: £3,399



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Freddy Files

This year's show was an absolutely brilliant, multi-faceted experience that delivered everything it promised

Words and photos Ivan McCutcheon

Seven years ago, Frederick Peeters of Belgian Cal Look VW club, Der Autobahn Scrapers, put his name to a little get together of air-cooled VWs in his home town of Ninove, just south of Brussels in the middle of March. In actual fact, Freddy had been organising his event for a decade prior to this, but it's since changing its name to The Freddy Flies that the event has really picked up pace and became a monster.

The town centre of Ninove is closed on the Sunday to normal traffic, and only VWs are allowed to enter. The first 800 cars to arrive get in, and each of these participants are given a goody bag containing an event t-shirt, dash plaque, special I-Can collectable energy drink and a load of cool stickers.

Although an exact figure cannot be given, claims of 1,000+ VWs seemed realistic to us. All of the overflow car parks were full of VWs, as was every side street we walked down. We saw cars from Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria and masses from the UK. As Freddy himself told us: "I'm so happy when I see all the air coolers from all over Europe cruising, or scraping, into the cozy little town of Ninove."

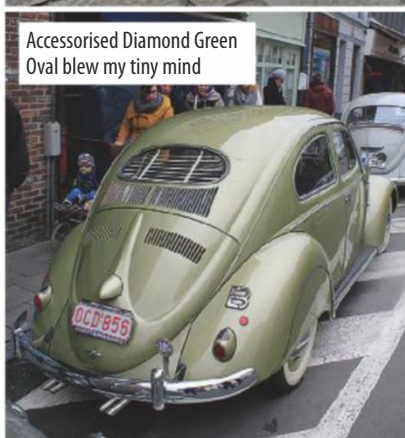
There's no event quite like The Freddy Files and, in a way, that's a good thing as it makes it one to look forward to through the winter. I know there are VW shows held before this, but The Freddy Files is what kicks my show season off and, judging by the number of other people present, I'm not alone in my thinking. ■



You need a seriously narrowed beam to get BTRs this far into the arch



VolksWorld put up the Best of Show award and this year it was Lloyd Jackson's Split Beetle on air that took the honours, as well as stealing the show



Accessorised Diamond Green Oval blew my tiny mind



Original Ruby Red '64 1500S had super low mileage



One of the last of the first generation Squarebacks from 1969



Original, bleached paintwork made this US-spec Deluxe for us

THE UK CRUISE



Terry Settle's bad to the bone UK lowlight Ghia on big-inch Berms



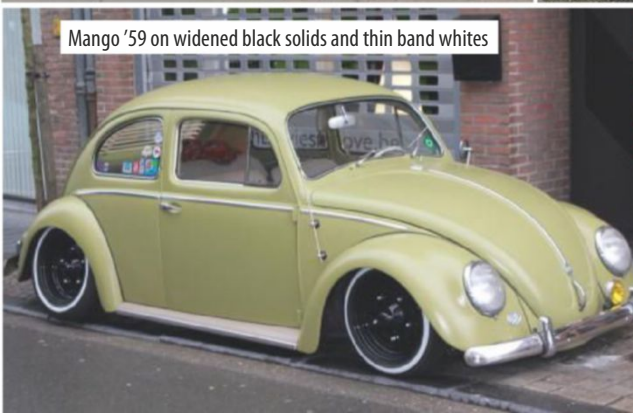
Check out the Porsche 356 engine lid grille on this Panel



Black solids (rears on spacers) on black hubs with chrome bolts with skinnies and fats = winner, winner, chicken dinner!



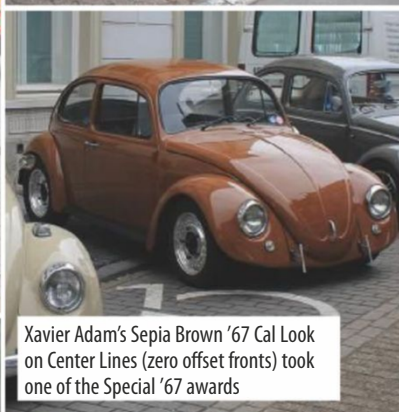
We got right into this 1303, which mixed up Cal and German Look to great effect



Mango '59 on widened black solids and thin band whites



We featured John Blesgraf's '69 Bay in October 2007. John is part of the Nederbugs crew and is as cool as his Bus!



Xavier Adam's Sepia Brown '67 Cal Look on Center Lines (zero offset fronts) took one of the Special '67 awards



356B T6 outlaw packs a 2110cc Type 1 motor



Flatline Lowriders' Dries Van Hamme aka Fat D debuted his stunning '61



We don't even know what this is, but it's mad!



In the Eurotunnel. Steve Walker's 181



Looks like we got ourselves a convoy...

Until you have witnessed it first hand, you can't appreciate how much of a buzz the 120 VW convoy over to this show is. For the last three years, Darren Medland and Andy Finch of Spike's Vintage Restorations have rallied British VW owners together to cruise over to the show.

Cool Flo Lifestyle, Ball's'd, Deluxe Metalworks and VW Retro all stump up merchandise for goodie bags and awards, while American VW artist, Ron Petro, created the artwork for a poster sold to raise money for charity, this year Multiple Sclerosis UK.

The cruise cars travelled through the Eurotunnel, re-grouped at Calais services on the Saturday and took a leisurely drive with two rest stops on route to the Witkap Brewery.



Rolling into Ninove after driving from the UK



SHOW REPORT Ninove

WITKAP BREWERY



At the Witkap Brewery it was total Van jam



Flawless L428 Graphite Silver '58 Ghia took a Top 15 award



Ex-army T2B with window and light covers was for sale at €12,500

On paper, starting a VW show at a brewery is madness, and it's no better in reality! Having been up before dawn, and travelling since, the destination of the cruise from the UK (and a cold beer) couldn't be more welcome. And the reception we all receive from Frederic Peeters and his team of organisers couldn't be warmer.

The cool thing about the Witkap gathering is that it's like a cozy little car show, and everyone can get to know the bods they've been driving amongst. There's an award ceremony, which this year I got roped into announcing. Car of the Cruise went to Mark Davis' white over coral Split and the Cool Flo Choice went to the just completed, South African '67 Crew Cab built by Greg Burnard.



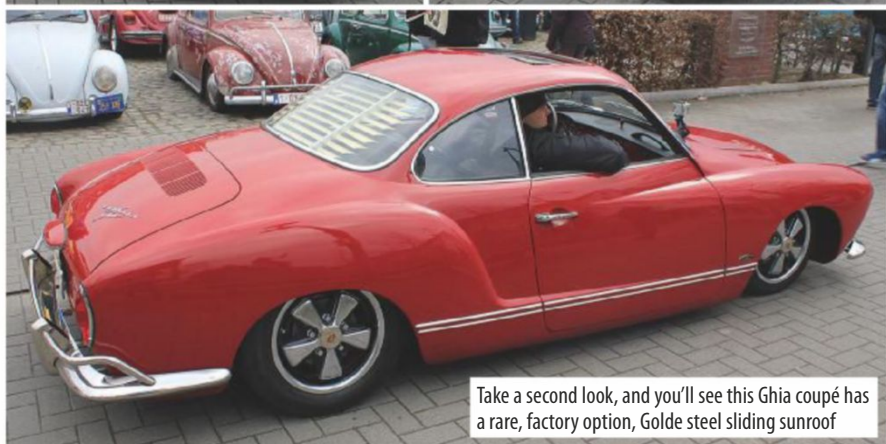
Greg Burnard's '67 Double Cab



This 1964 1500S Notch looks absolutely stunning



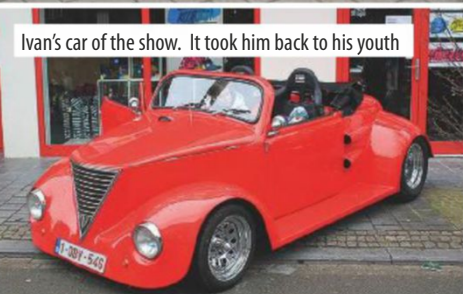
DAS founder and EB-I organiser, Mike Walravens', Oval



Take a second look, and you'll see this Ghia coupé has a rare, factory option, Golde steel sliding sunroof



This Split Bug was a '52 crotch cooler



Ivan's car of the show. It took him back to his youth



Rarely seen hue – 1960 Arctic Blue (L373)



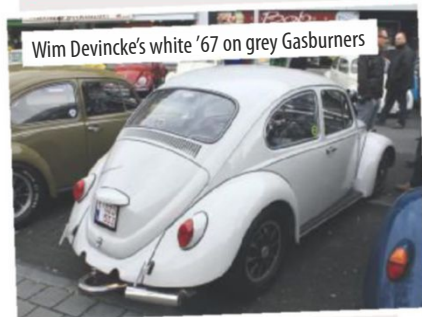
Yves Maerten's Savannah Beige '67 on detailed Fuchs



SHOW REPORT Ninove

'67 HEAVEN

Wim Devinck's white '67 on grey Gasburners



Modern Porsche alloys and brakes and a honking Type 4



Marco de Waal has gone Vintage Speed



Black Resto Cal Oval with a red interior, swan necks and detailed Fuchs. Yummy



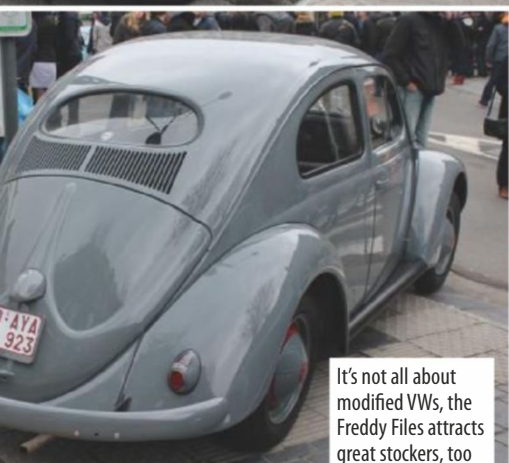
Cool Cal Look '67 with copied licence plate



Another rare colour – '60 only Ceramic Green. Ragtop, too



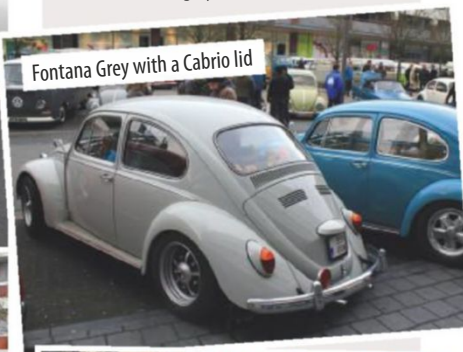
It's not all about modified VWs, the Freddy Files attracts great stockers, too



Belgian-built Apal is based on a Beetle chassis



Fontana Grey with a Cabrio lid



Slammed French ragtop with fender skirts



Something a bit different – magnesium BBS splits. Cool. Pricey



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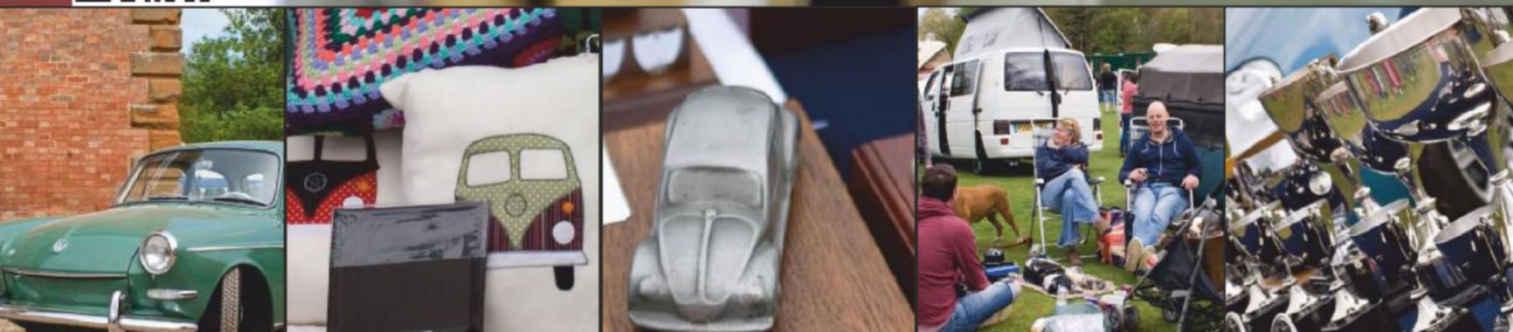
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OWNER INFO

NAME: James Peene

AGE: Nearly 40!

LOCATION: Guildford

CAR: '66 1300 sunroof Beetle

THIS MONTH: Remove my new brakes, clean the rust off and paint them, as I should have done in the first place

Roll with it

James gets back to work on the Penny Pincher, and goes over some familiar ground

That's a lesson learned. Well, actually it isn't because I will be slack in the future. I promise. What am I wittering on about? The fact that I knew I should have painted my new disc brakes before fitting them, but so desperate was I to see some progress, I fitted them anyway. Naked.

It goes without saying that over the course of my long absence from the garage, the bloody things rusted up. In fact, they looked more like Jon Gilbert's orange beard than the shiny EMPI discs I'd fitted in November. The only solution was to pull them back off the spindles, sand off the rust and give them a protective coat of silver paint. So that's precisely what I did on my last visit to the garage. Boring, but necessary.

Back for more

There are few things more frustrating than going backwards and re-visiting a job, but then that's the price you pay for being hasty (which, believe it or not, is not something I'm often accused of).

Every cloud has a silver lining though, because doing this meant I could now bolt my repro BRMs onto the freshly painted discs, rather than my manky old

steels, as the interim gap meant I had time to source the correct wheel bolts needed. For anyone that's interested in this sort of detail, the replica BRMs I'm using require a bolt with a longer length of thread than the stock wheel bolts offer. I ordered up a batch of the correct ones from VW Heritage, although I have to say Machine 7 were really helpful, advising me what I needed when they didn't have enough in stock. Lovely guys. Thank you.

➤ A spot of elbow grease and a rattle can makeover worked wonders on my new anchors. Note, the discs have been masked, not painted

Does my rear look big in this? Probably. BRM replicas look good, but those tyres are way too fat, so replacements have been sorted

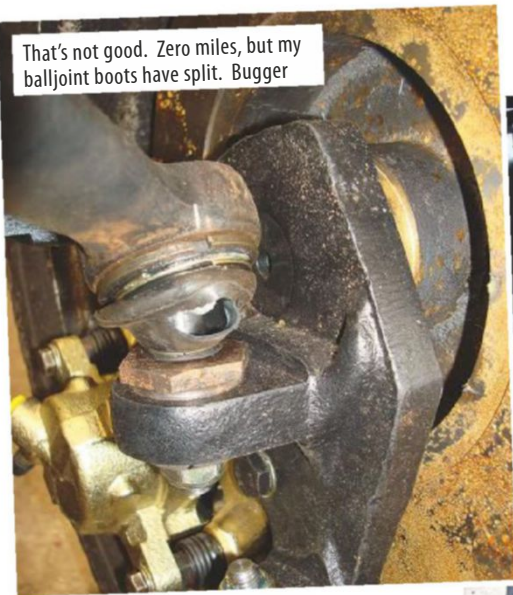


➤ Lesson 1: don't put off today what you'll only have to do tomorrow...

✓ ...yes, I should've painted them first!



That's not good. Zero miles, but my balljoint boots have split. Buzzer



Jacking the front up to remove the brakes revealed another re-visiting job for the future. The rubber boots on my brand new, zero mile, long travel balljoints have split. This is a real pisser, as the car hasn't turned a wheel since they were fitted (and that was a major mission in itself). I can only assume the perishing cold has wreaked havoc on them, but it could just be that they're crap quality. Either way, I wouldn't have expected this to happen. Steve thinks I can just buy replacement boots, so I'll need to look into this, as anything I can do to prevent having to press new balljoints into the arms will be a result.

Baby's got back

With the brakes looking resplendant in a fresh coat of silver, dry and back on the spindles, the wheels went on. They're currently shod with some double massive rubber, because the chap I bought them from (that man Mr. Gilbert again) likes a bit of girth. I, however, do not. So, I've ditched the 145 / 205 / 70 combo and ordered up some new tyres, Firestones of course, in 135 and 195 sizes front and rear, respectively.

You'll also notice from the picture below that I've been adding more bits

Steering box cleaned up, painted and ready to go back on the 'pan for the first time in two years



“ I will be slack in the future. I promise ”

to the floorpan. Steve suggested life would be much easier if the steering was connected and both front wheels pointed in the same direction at once. He's not wrong. Pushing the 'pan in and out of its nook to work on has been simplified enormously, thanks to the beam's reacquaintance with the steering box and arms. I say reacquaintance, but the beam is an entirely new affair from Aire Valley Speed Shop, so has never had a steering box bolted to it before. Neither does it have provision for a steering damper, so I need to buy one of those billet bolt-on jobbies and a new damper before I'm done.

What comes next? Brake lines and a 'pan seal, then I'm onto welding again, this time on the body. ■

✓ I'm really pleased I went for satin, rather than gloss black. Understated cleanliness



▲ Steering box and arms have been fitted. Just a steering damper to go and a final fettle. Oh, and brake lines, bleeding, tracking and setting up...

➤ Wheeled out of it's resting place and looking pretty good, even if I do say so myself

VOLKS WORLD PROJECT CARS



Lights, camera, er...

Owner: VolksWorld Garage
Cars: All of them
This month: Jon Gilbert broke out the camera to make everyone feel awkward by uploading live project reports on www.volksworld.com/videos-blog

Owner: Jon Gilbert
Cars: '61 Ragtop
This month: I finally got around to getting the Flat4 bumper overrides to the '61. Do I like the result? Yes, and no – I haven't decided yet



Lovely rubbery



Engine in

Owner: Steve Gosling
Cars: '61 ragtop, '67 Ghia
This month: Two weeks until The VolksWorld Show and the engine has just gone in the car. By now you should know if the car made it or not, whereas I'm still not sure!

Owner: Cathal O'Toole
Cars: '77 Cal Look Beetle, GT Beetle and '73 Riviera Camper
This month: Over the winter there have been very few opportunities to enjoy the GT, but now it's time to get behind the wheel again. Yay!



spring has sprung



A friend indeed

Owner: Mark Walker
Car: '68 Beetle
This month: Project '68 has been on hold whilst I repair a friend's '61 double-door Panel. Now that is solid again, I'm hoping to get some time in on the Beetle

Owner: Gordie Woollacott
Car: '79 Westy
This month: My '79 Westy is all but complete and will soon make way for this, my dream '70 Westy. Yeah, it's more of a nightmare right now!



Dreamer

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NoiseKiller

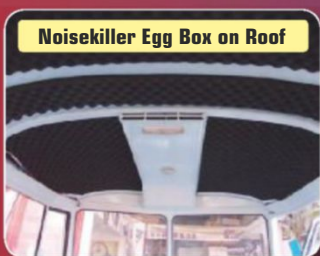
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Noisekiller Egg Box on Roof



Noisekiller Barrier mat used on wheelarch

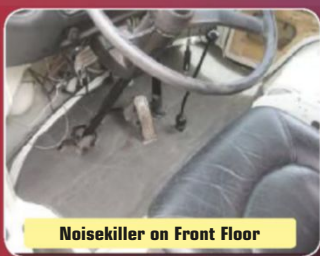


Noisekiller sound barrier used on rear bulkhead
under rear seat

Noisekiller on Middle Floor



Noisekiller on Front Floor



Noisekiller sound Barrier on floors



Noisekiller Barrier mat on front and rear wheel
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Raised up whilst the final jobs are carried out for the MoT test



OWNER INFO

NAME: Ivan McCutcheon

AGE: 8¾

CAR: '67 Beetle

WORK THIS MONTH: Have the engine fitted and tested, put the car through an MoT and drive it to Ninove. Not :-(

No Ninove

The worst thing about making plans is when they fail through not fault of your own...

There's no easy way of putting it, I am far from a happy bunny this month. I have experienced the whole spectrum of emotions, from being completely fired up to totally down during a month that has seen a lot going on with my '67. It's been a rollercoaster ride, that's for sure.

The rebuilt, higher compression, 2007cc engine was run up and the new camshaft bedded in back last November, but I did something to two vertebrae in my neck around the same time, so was bed ridden and on heavy medication until the first week of January. I then spent the rest of that month trying to wean myself off the medication.

Come mid-February, Pete Roberts at Funkenblitz contacted me to say he'd started work again on my '67, and it was the best news I'd had in ages. The engine was now in the car, so I felt motivated and positive about it finally being back on the road. So much so I started making plans to drive it to the '67 Heaven-themed Freddy Files event in Ninove, Belgium in March. What better show could there be to get the car back out for? I was so happy, I posted the following up on my facebook page on February 16: "Looks like my '67 will be

back on the road at long last and in time for Ninove in March! The last time it was on the road was five years ago."

The next day I drove down to Southsea with my son, Oscar. He's eight-years old now, but has yet to go in the car. As you can imagine, he's been even keener than I have to get the car back on the road. After handing over another wedge of cash for work, Oscar and I left with the final bits that needed powder coating.

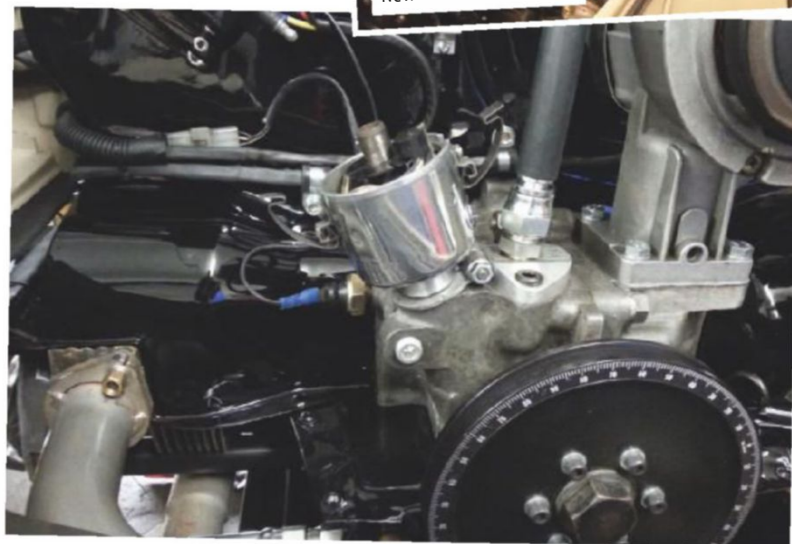
The oil cooler was fitted and



Project 01 re-worked the Porsche 356 oil filler



New oil lines look sweet



➤ Alex Taylor of Defcon 3 hand polished my Bosch 009 distributor body



◀ The Crane Cams coil cover has been powder coated. Note the Project 01 throttle cable roller

◀ Underside of the original fuel tank has been re-done

➤ The deep sump and ceramic exhaust you (or I!) don't often see



the new lines made and plumbed in. An electric fuel pump and new fuel lines went in, too. It was obvious when the fuel tank was lifted out that the underside of it was showing its age but, as it hasn't been touched since it was made in 1967, that's not really a surprise. It was getting to the stage where if it wasn't stripped and repainted, the rust would have taken its toll. So Vernon's stripped it and repainted it.

As new oil fittings have been used, and the car was now having an external oil cooler and breather, the Porsche 356 oil filler the engine had been fitted with in its previous incarnation needed re-working to suit. Charlie at Project 01 in Botley, Hampshire (www.project01.co.uk) TIG welded up the unwanted holes and added new male fittings. The breather then had to be powder coated to match the tinware.

With around 10 days to go before the show, things were looking good. Alex Taylor of Defcon 3 in Ringwood jumped in to help Pete get the job done. Amongst the numerous jobs he helped with, he hand polished the body of the Bosch 009 as, after 20 years, it hardly looked in keeping with the rest of the engine. I was now certain it was on target, especially as on March 5 the car was driven to the MoT test centre. There was a little play in one front wheel bearing and a leak from the driver's side rear brake (some gearbox oil had got past the seal and onto the brake shoes). Pete sorted these jobs out and the '67 had its first MoT certificate since 2009.

On March 8 Pete started putting some miles on the car to check everything was okay with the engine. There was a bit of an intermittent idle jet issue, which turned out to just need cleaning out.

The plan was to get the car back on Tuesday 10, but Pete wanted to drain the oil, check the colour of it and refill it with Mobil 1. Oh, and re-set the valve clearances. He drove it to Bournemouth and back and said it was good as gold, so we agreed I'd get the car back on the Wednesday before Ninove. That turned into the Thursday, but then disaster struck. When driving it to my house

✓ I have to say, despite the fact the car didn't make Ninove, the engine looks absolutely amazing



“...then disaster struck. When driving it to my house the gearbox let go”

late that night, the gearbox let go. I was floored, but this was nothing to how upset Oscar was. So, the upshot is the engine has to come back out and the gearbox be rebuilt. Like I said, I am not a happy bunny. ■



It's first MoT certificate since 2009. Shame I can't drive the bloody thing!



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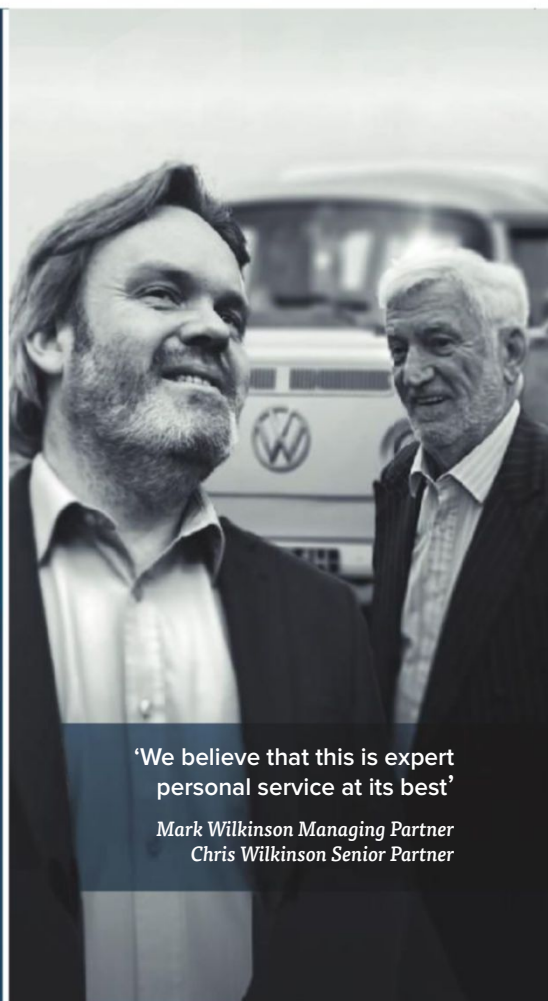
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DIY engine build part 1

That may sound daunting but, approached methodically, it's well within the reach of the home enthusiast

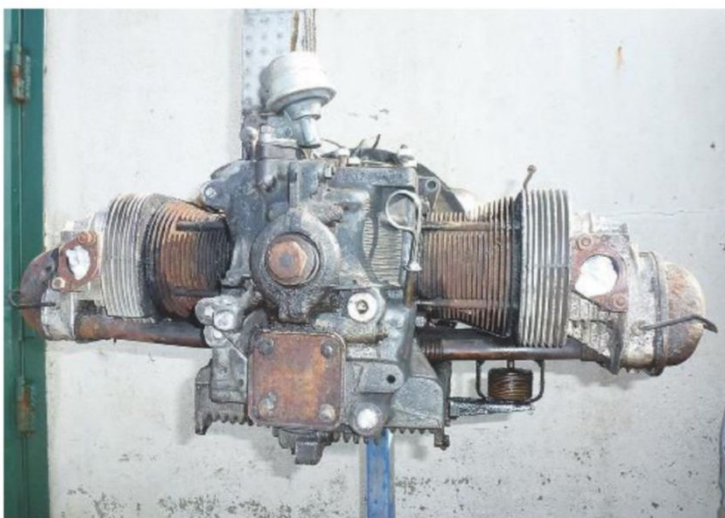
Words and photos Matt Keene

This month's how to is part one of a series that will cover the reconditioning of a 1600cc twin-port engine. Our aim is to show you how simple the Volkswagen engine is, and how you can go about stripping, measuring, checking and rebuilding your engine at home, without breaking the bank or purchasing a fortune's worth of specialist tools. Though we will show some such tools in use, we will always try to give an alternative means of achieving the same result to keep it well within the reach of a DIY enthusiast. That's not to say there will be any compromises, the job will still be done right.

Whilst the air-cooled VW engine may well be simple, missing just one little detail or overlooking tight spots, for example, will lead to disaster. The ethos of these features will therefore be: never rush and always check twice.

Along the way we will point out possible pitfalls and how to remedy them. We will measure components and work to factory tolerances, with the emphasis on analysis and reconditioning existing parts rather than simply replacing with new. As such, there will be some jobs we take to a machine shop, so it's worth looking for a good one in your area. However, where parts fail to meet tolerances and the only choice is new parts, we will discuss the options available, including in some cases purchasing good, used parts.

Finally, a note on specialist tools. These range from simple locking devices that are invaluable in loosening the flywheel gland nut to Vernier calipers and micrometers for measuring components. Pretty much all of the equipment used is relatively inexpensive – a flywheel locking tool costs £5, a second hand micrometer can be had from eBay for a tenner – so for well under £100 you could equip yourself with a handy set of engine building tools that, treated properly, will last a lifetime. Who knows, you may even end up building engines for friends to offset costs... ■



01 Our feature engine is the ubiquitous 1600cc twin port, which powered all manner of Volkswagens over the years. We have already stripped ours down to a long block but, as removing the tinware and ancillaries is simply a case of undoing nuts, bolts and screws, there's no real mystery there



02 The next job is draining the oil. Doing this on an engine without a sump nut is quite a chore, but a necessary evil. Ensure you glove up for the occasion and have a suitable receptacle handy. I've never quite worked out why VW chose not to fit a sump plug on some models...



03 Here's a selection of the tools necessary for the initial strip down. You could easily do it without these, but they make life much easier. The specialist tools pictured from left to right are: oil control check valve tool, distributor drive tool, flywheel locking tool and a case splitting tool

HOW TO Rebuild a VW Type 1 engine



04 One of the beauties of an engine stand is the ability to rotate the engine through any angle. After removing number 1 and 2 cylinders' rocker cover, the engine is rotated at the pulley nut to ensure all rockers are in the fully closed position. This takes any load off the rocker shafts



05 You will see me use an engraving tool along the way. This is to mark each component so I know its orientation for reassembly. Used components take a wear pattern or 'set' and it's important that each interfacing component goes back together with the component it was previously mated to



06 With the rockers removed, the pushrods can be accessed and removed. Again, mark the orientation of the pushrods so they mate with the same rocker and lifter (tappet) at rebuild time



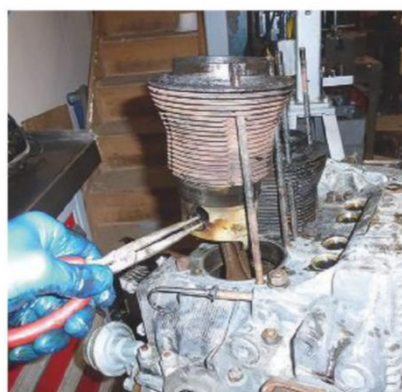
07 Undo all eight of the cylinder head retaining nuts, starting from the outside in. The upper four nuts will definitely benefit from a little soaking in penetrating fluid



08 It's not uncommon for cylinder head studs to come out when undoing the upper four cylinder head securing nuts. Do not despair – we will address this issue later on in the series



09 Removing the cylinder head may well take some gentle tapping with a soft mallet. Do not tap on any of the cooling fins, be it the cylinder fins or cylinder head fins, as they break off with consummate ease!

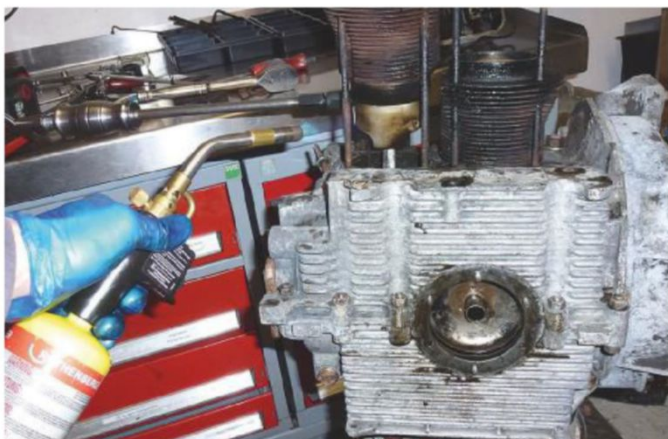


10 Once the cylinder head is off, the pushrod tubes can be removed. The next task is to disassemble the cylinders and pistons. I prefer to slide the cylinder up just enough to reveal the wrist pins and circlips, as this keeps the piston rings protected whilst you remove the wrist pins, which can often be tight



11 Remove the circlip and then see if the wrist pin will move without due force. Sometimes the pins can be pushed out by finger alone, but in this case it was tight so I opted to use a blind bearing tool and slide hammer. Always support the cylinder when using any force





12 When that still didn't work, I opted to use a little heat to warm the piston. If you choose this route, take great care and waft the blow torch around, don't concentrate it in one place. The idea being that as aluminium has a greater coefficient of expansion than steel, once warm the wrist pin will come out with little effort



13 It may not be necessary to remove the cylinder head studs, but I would recommend that you do. This will ensure that upon reassembly you remember to Loctite each stud in place, making it secure for years to come



14 In this shot I have switched to cylinders number three and four, and have repeated steps from 4 through to 13, and am now concentrating on removing the oil cooler



15 The fuel pump is simple to remove, but the Bakelite shaft support can be an absolute bee hatch. I use very gentle force with a soft mallet and slowly work the fuel pump pedestal upwards. Take great care here, they break annoyingly easily



16 The use of a flywheel locking tool and a Torque Meister is perhaps the easiest way to remove the 36mm gland nut. I have heard stories of people using scaffold poles on breaker bars and screwdrivers to jam the flywheel against the engine mount stud. If you choose this path, ensure you have 999 on speed dial



17 Again, perhaps a fancy tool that isn't strictly necessary, but a giant three-legged pulley makes removing the flywheel a doddle. Alternatively, tap it off with a soft-faced mallet



18 Before trying to prise the case apart, the oil pump needs to be removed. It's quite often overlooked, leaving you red faced!

Next month we will continue the strip down by splitting the crankcase and analysing the component parts

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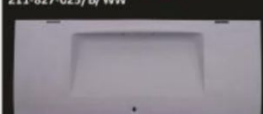
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Kent VW collective

Words Darren Porter Photos James Wallace

This is my completely DIY 1973 Beetle daily driver. During the daytime I'm an Assistant Manager for DFS in Ramsgate, Kent but, come night time and at weekends, I like to spend as much of my spare time as possible at my mate's dad's garage in Margate. It's from here that a bunch of us are able to play around and work on our ongoing VW projects with a much better range of tools and shared experience between us than tackling any job on our own. In fact, without Lee Collier, whose dad is the proprietor of the garage, we'd all be like a bunch of VW vagrants longing for a place to hang out. Like all the best social

clubs, it's all about the banter and there's no end of good natured Mickey taking thrown around. We also attend a lot of the VW shows together and, while we're not a club, there's definitely a collective conscience that unites us all. For us, it's just about hanging out together and having a laugh.

Anyway, this project all started with a seriously battered and bruised Biscay Blue 1200cc Beetle. I got it for my £400 from Folkestone, about an hour away from where I live, and towed it back with only one brake working. The last time it had been on the road was in 1996, and along the route we had to keep stopping because a wheel kept catching fire!

RESTORATION TIMELINE



1 JANUARY 2012
Bracing the 'shell to keep it from folding up



BUILDER INFO

NAME Darren Porter

AGE 30

LOCATION Broadstairs, Kent
OCCUPATION DFS Assistant Manager

BIGGEST CHALLENGE The welding

FAVOURITE PART The modified beam to touch the floor

WHAT'S NEXT? A Split Screen Bus for me

I'm the first to admit now it's finished it's no show pony as I use it every day to get to and from work. It also lives on the road outside my house, whatever the weather, but I like to think it's come a long way since I've owned it.

We actually bought the car for my sister-in-law and her other half as they were keen to get involved with the shows, but unfortunately they never got round to the restoration, so I ended up taking it off their hands for £200. The plan was to do it up and sell it on as, at the time, I had a Split, a Bay and another Beetle to work on and Rachael (my other half) said I didn't need four VWs at home. But once the decision was made to go ahead with this project, they all had to go as

my daughter was also due around the same time.

To be completely honest, I had no idea how deep a hole I was digging myself as

it looked pretty good, thanks to the three foot of clagged filler that had been applied...

I'd never even picked up a welder

before, but my mate, Mark, bought one so I started practising with a borrowed mask at home in the garden. The entire bottom six inches of the car were totally shot, but there's nothing quite like being thrown in at the deep end if you want to learn to swim, right?

I'd done a bit of painting in the past, but never a full car, so that was a pretty daunting prospect, especially as it still required huge sections of the inner

“ I had no idea how deep a hole I was digging myself ”

▲ Fitting earlier wide chrome trim meant enlarging the holes, but it brought the body in line with the earlier exterior panels



▲ Warning: don't fit seat covers in the living room when drunk, you might damage your sofa!



2 AUGUST 2012
Body rot was extensive, but tackled with gusto



3 AUGUST 2012
The whole front end was shot, so it was chopped off...



4 OCTOBER 2012
...and replaced with new, pre-67 pattern parts

TECH INFO

YEAR 1973

ENGINE Stock 1200cc, fully rebuilt

SUSPENSION

Modified 2-inch narrowed beam, dropped spindles, Dub on Air air ride kit, 2-gallon tank, Viair 380c compressor, ¼-inch lines

BRAKES Rebuilt factory drums all round

WHEELS AND TYRES

Stock four bolt steels with baby moon hubcaps; Nankang 165/50 and 165/65-15 tyres

INTERIOR New seat covers, carpets, painted headlining, stereo upgrade



◀ Dash is essentially stock, but with a modern stereo and the air ride controls mounted beneath with a single, twin-needle gauge and manual switches to regulate ride height



◀ VWorks Dub on Air system uses a Viair 380 compressor, a three-gallon tank and ¼-inch line and gives 4-5 inches of lift

OUR OPINION

You've got to admire anyone who tackles a full-on resto like this without any prior experience with a MIG welder or a spray gun. Darren has certainly done himself proud though, and has since gone on to repaint a number of his mates' VWs. Get in there my son

James

wings cutting out and making good, new sills, large sections of the a-pillar replacing and the door bottoms re-fabricating. The rear valance was even held on with superglue!

With new wings necessary, I opted to go for a pre-'67 facelift, complete with front apron and matching long bonnet and decklid. In other words, a wrong'un, as many out there will probably refer to it. Despite all the negativity that floats around the scene and the recent upsurge in popularity for late models, I don't regret going down this route and I really like the look of the car.

After tackling the body repairs, things were really starting to take shape.

The body was split from the 'pan at this point, so I also set about rebuilding the braking system to factory spec and renewing the steering box as it seemed fruitless not to give the floorpan the once over while it was apart. Plenty of POR-15 and Hammerite gloss black were used to tart up the surprisingly solid floorpan halves – obviously someone had paid some attention to the 'pan in the past.

TOP RESTO TIP
When painting with metallic paint, ensure all the bolt-on panels are sprayed in the same orientation as they will fit the car otherwise they may not match

Having taken the majority of the body back to bare metal, it took nearly six months of late nights and the occasional day off from work to reach a stage where I could finally get the bodyshell in epoxy primer but, having reached that milestone, the euphoria was enough to lift the spirits of everyone who had helped out up to that point. Another few coats of high build 2k primer on top and plenty of hours spent flattening it back and the day finally arrived where the Renault Calypso Red Metallic paint could be dusted on. Naturally, as a novice sprayer, I opted for a metallic finish to make things difficult for myself. The only real issue I found with painting a clear lacquer over base was all the panels had to be painted in the same orientation they would hang on the car so the metallic bits settle for a uniform finish. I'm totally stoked with how it turned out as there's a very subtle pearl effect to it that's only visible in the most extreme sunlight, and I'm pretty sure it'll be the only time something from a Renault gets a mention in *VolksWorld*!



5 DECEMBER 2012
Part-way through prep and nearly ready for primer



6 MAY 2013
Having the use of a spray booth helped enormously



7 MAY 2013
Paint is a metallic base with clear lacquer top coat



◀ There was a time when just about every late model Beetle wore an earlier decklid and, while Darren knows some people won't approve, he loves his late early model to bits

“ Naturally, as a novice sprayer, I opted for a metallic finish to make things difficult for myself ”

One nice surprise was finding a receipt in the car that suggested the 1200cc motor had been rebuilt a year prior to the car being taken off the road, so I just stripped it and detailed the ancillaries.

Initially, I lowered the car using Sway-A-Way adjusters and wound the rear spring plates down two outer splines, but the stance wasn't what I wanted, so I contacted VWorks about the Dub on Air kit they offer. It still didn't go as low as I'd have liked so, together with Mark and Shaun, we modified the front shock mounts and added some dropped spindles so it now settles just millimetres

from the black stuff, but with 4-5 inches of lift to make it useable around town I'm pleased to say the ride quality is just like standard (really?!- Ed).

Together with my other half, we also sourced a seat re-upholstery kit online and set to it one night in the living room after we'd got a little drunk. Even though she hates the car and the wire frames somehow damaged our sofa, Rachael played a blinder with the re-trim.

Since completing the car in the summer of 2013, it's been used for numerous weddings and events as Lee won't leave me alone about getting it

out there with his Classics for Occasions sideline. I know it's going to pick up imperfections by using it day in, day out, but I really can't be arsed with wrapping cars up in cotton wool.

Since painting this car, I've also gone on to do a Split Screen Crew Cab, and my dad's got me lined up to do his Isetta bubble car. Not bad for a lad who flogs sofas for a living, hey? I never dreamt I'd spend as much as I have, and probably went over twice what I had in mind, but the results are totally worth it and everyone stops to have a chat about it wherever I go. I'm off down the garage now to mop and polish it as it's booked for another wedding next week!

Thanks: Thanet Motor Centre, Lee Collier and his Dad, Mark the locksmith, my missus and litt'un



8 OCTOBER 2013
Engine had been rebuilt so just needed detailing



9 FEBRUARY 2014
It's a 1200, so has a half headliner, painted black



10 FEBRUARY 2014
Trailing edge of the wings now rest on the ground



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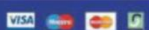
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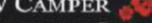


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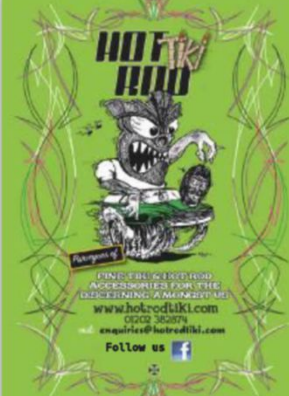
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1964 Volkswagen Beetle

He's a resto cal so he's completely stock front to back and is still 6 volt ... Original workman like 1300cc engine also completely stock, the car's been slammed with a 2" shortened front beam (adjustable) and adjustable spring plates to the rear, this gives the car camber on the back and that necessary stance for admiring glances plus the vw show scene will almost demand it. Mileage: 25000, Price: £4,200 Southern Scotland, Tel : 01287746657 owenrleeming@outlook.com



VW 1969 BEETLE

1600CC Tax Exempt Beetle, Many extras, Project Car engine runs, body work needs work, £750, Western England, Tel: 07779275598, chas55@live.co.uk

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Karmann Ghia



1968 Karmann Ghia

Red with white roof, solid all round and very well looked after, garaged other than when it's being driven. Please email for more photo' and information ian@ibaron.orangehome.co.uk Mileage: Irrelevant, Price: £9,500, Midlands Tel: 07973659219, ian@ibaron.orangehome.co.uk

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1972 Bay

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1975 T2 Devon Bay

RHD, 1600cc Air-cooled (electronic ign), Fully restored and resprayed and reupholstered, Tax & MOT to May 2015. Full width rock and roll bed with 2 seat belts + 1 lap belt. £15000 Midlands, Tel: 07970491006 ttcummins@googlemail.com



1979 Sliding Sunroof Bus

FOR SALE IS.....THE HEIDI BUS Reluctantly I am having to sell my beloved Heidi Bus. It was my dream to own a VW Camper, unfortunately now with future plans, she has to be rehomed :O(Now I'm no mechanic so I'll do my best..... She was imported from California so is LHD, and registered in the UK in 2012 Therefore she is SOLID with very little rust (although she does have some surface rust on her roof due to the Ca sun I would think) Arches and underneath is solid... and original. what can I say.... solid!! This really is her selling point..... you won't have to spend 100's on getting her welded up... just get in and go!!! She has been sorn (and is currently sorn) every winter on hard standing Her engine to my knowledge is 2L injection, and has never let me down or missed a beat. She has a lot of pull!! She has an M.O.T until July. Her last M.O.T she went straight through with no problems at all, and previous one only failed on a bulb!!! Her Mileage is 53200..... she's done very few miles whilst in this country purely due to not having the time to take her out She has the gubbins for air conditioning, however It's not connected up.... I'm told by a VW Restore company this is quite rare She has a factory fitted sliding sunroof which is rare as there's not many of them about (This was functioning up until this winter, now just clicks... to someone in the know is probably an easy fix, her sunroof drains will need attention however) She has a makeshift bed in the back, which is what she entered the country with and has some space under for storage Her front and back bumpers have been re-sprayed and come with a full set over Immaculate over riders which have also been re-sprayed She does have a dent on the trim just under the back window and also a small dent in the passenger side sliding door Paintwork is good, is as expected for a girl of her age. Not perfect but far far from bad She has a Tow bar that I took off when getting the bumpers re-sprayed... just needs bolting back on Custom made spare wheel cover I have a few bits to go with here which include Brand new curtain rails Brand new back lights Heavy duty rock and roll bed hinges She will also be sold with a Just Kampers silver specific T2 Bay cover and a wheel clamp The theory was as a carpenter by trade....to put a new interior in the back of her, however I never got round to it, and now she has to go :O(Viewing is recommended and welcome but NO TIME WASTERS PLEASE I NEED A QUICK SALE THEREFORE THE PRICE IS LOWER THAN I BOUGHT HER FOR 3YRS AGO Bus located near Braintree Essex, Mileage: 53200, Price: £9500, Eastern England, Tel 07793970429 sketchergal@btinternet.com



1980 T25 Westfalia Joker

aManchester, Mileage: 52000, £7000 or near offer, Northern England, Tel: 0780 358 2429 dangibsonhome@gmail.com



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VW T2b 1975 Panel Van Solid With Lot's Of Love
I saved it from scrap at the last minute. So it is grateful and gave me lot's of fun. Every little thing is functional and I keep adding details. The motor and gear box are all original and they work like a clock. It is respayed in Marino Yellow the original color as it was , but with white roof to avoid our wonderful sun heat. All rubber is replaced and new tires and shocks are all round. Same key and original Greek owners manual is also provided. I must say I'm only the third owner. I transport my scale model ships and airplanes so the interior in the cargo area is plain. However in the front office is a real comfy place with Burberry's real cloth on the door panels and Westphalia seats and roof racks. VW Heritage has contributed the most parts. A side tent matching the yellow color is also included and a small foldable table with two wooden classic chairs. I will be more than happy to send you all the pictures I have as well as other information you might want. The "Lemon" as I call it, is ready for fun with you too.It is ready for a trip around Europe!!Please enjoy...Mileage: 87,000km, 11,000€, International, Tel: 00306944316201, imaginear@otenet.gr



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1979 VW T2 - Westfalia Helsinki

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Frank Novotny

Volkswagen has long been renowned for the quality of its public relations. It all started in 1946 with Frank Novotny, who crafted the company's message for three decades

Words
Richard Gunn

H

owever good a car company's vehicles are, they won't sell if nobody knows about them. The task of getting good news out to the media and public – and successfully dealing with any bad publicity – is the job of the public relations department,

and Volkswagen is one of the masters of the game. The first person to be VW's PR chief was Frank Novotny, and he was a major force in the company and the Beetle becoming internationally known. Yet, when he started, Volkswagen was still in ruins from the war, run by the British army and nobody had any inkling how prosperous it would become.

Although he spent most of his working career in Germany, even being awarded the Great Cross of Merit in 1968 for his outstanding economic services to the German Federal Republic, as his surname suggests, it wasn't his country of origin. He was born in October 1905 in Trest, Bohemia – now part of the Czech Republic. After an education focussing on commerce, he worked for various

trade organisations in Vienna and Prague, eventually setting up his own import / export business. However, as the Second World War drew to a close in 1945, he sent his wife west from Prague to escape the invading Russian

“helped forge the strong brand identity”

army. She settled in Wolfsburg. Novotny drove to join her two months later, but nearly didn't make it, at one point becoming trapped on a bridge between American and Russian forces. He pulled out an old press card he'd kept as a memento of a visit to Chicago in 1933 and showed it to the US troops, claiming to be a war correspondent the Russians were attempting to detain. “Oh, you're from Chicago,” said one soldier. “You must be a gangster.” “I certainly am,” replied the short, portly, bushy-eyebrowed man, and was let through. Later, he used the same press pass to convince a British unit that he was an American reporter so they'd fill up his car with petrol. It was a measure of his quick thinking and resourcefulness.

Novotny reached Wolfsburg in summer 1945 and set himself up as an unofficial negotiator between the occupying British forces and the locals. That brought him into contact with Dr. Hermann Munch,



It took a clever marketing strategy, but even more clever PR work, to sell a German car across the world immediately after the Second World War. VW, under Novotny, did it with aplomb

the industrial lawyer who had been put in charge of running the factory by the British. He complained one day in 1946 that the newspapers were attacking the Beetle, production of which was slowly getting underway again. Novotny asked if there was anybody in charge of liaising

with the press and was told there wasn't. Four weeks later, in June, he had the job.

With the plant still being rebuilt, Novotny wrote the name of his new section – ‘Press Bureau’ – on a bit of paper and fixed it to his door. The story goes Major Ivan Hirst saw this and suggested he change it to Public Relations. With that, Volkswagen promptly became the first post-war German company to have its own PR department. Novotny initially worked for free, albeit after demanding 2,000 marks a month (when the highest salary at the factory was 1,000 marks). He finally started drawing an 850 mark salary in December 1946. He made sure he got all his back pay though.

Heinz Nordhoff took over at Volkswagen in January 1948, in preparation for ownership to be handed back to the West German people. Novotny, because of his efficiency and optimism, was one of the few employees from the old order kept on, and the two became good friends and confidants. His hard work and diligence in courteously but stalwartly dealing with the press helped forge the strong Volkswagen brand identity and message spread throughout Germany, Europe and then the world. He set the template for how the company still operates today.

Novotny stayed in charge of VW's PR for the rest of his career, becoming a director on its executive board in 1960. However, after Heinz Nordhoff died in 1968, his influence at the company was greatly diminished and he retired shortly after, in 1970.

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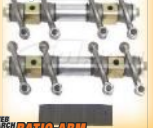
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